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THE CABIN IN THE CLEARING

AND

OTHER POEMS

BY

BENJAMIN S. PARKER

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TO MY WIFE

THIS LITTLE COLLECTION OF VERSES IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

B. S. P.

PREFACE

In presenting this unpretentious collection of verses, written during the course of a busy life, largely devoted to other than literary pursuits, it does not seem to me that an apology of either less or greater length is demanded. Very fully realizing that there was no large demand for the collection itself, I feel, with equal force, that those partial friends who have engaged themselves, before the event of publication, to become buyers and readers of this little volume, do not wish to be wearied with tedious excuses for the short-comings and crudities of its contents ; and I have not the temerity to address myself to any merely prospective audience of readers, lest I should be wasting words upon a goodly company that shall never exist in a more real domain than that of the imagination.

The intelligent reader needs not to be told that many of the "pieces" in this collection have been included on account of the experiences with which they are associated rather than for their supposed literary merits. This is true of much that the volume contains, and especially so of the "Pioneer Poems" and "Memorial Verses."

When an author sits down to tell why he has not written better, he not only dishonors his work, but also makes an exhibition of egotism and self-consciousness that furnishes a better key to what-

ever failures he may have made than he would be able to supply in any other way. I should be glad if what I have written were worthier, but I have no notion that the reader will expect anything great. Indeed I am persuaded that the anticipation of the limited public that will interest itself to any degree with my little offering is so modest in this respect that the performance will be quite equal to it.

B. S. P.

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THE CABIN IN THE CLEARING

AND

OTHER PIONEER POEMS

Time rolls his ceaseless course. The race of yore,
Who danced our infancy upon their knee,
And told our marveling boyhood legends store
Of their strange ventures, happed by land or sea,
How are they blotted from the things that be!
How few, all weak and withered of their force,
Wait on the verge of dark eternity,
Like stranded wrecks, the tide returning hoarse,
To sweep them from our sight! Time rolls
his ceaseless course.

—Sir Walter Scott.

THE CABIN IN THE CLEARING

BACKWARD gazing through the shadows.
As the evening fades away,
I perceive the little footprints,
Where the morning sunlight lay,
Warm and mellow, on the pathway
Leading to the open door
Of the cabin in the clearing,
Where my soul reclines once more.

Oh! that cabin in the clearing,
Where my Mary came, a bride,
Where our children grew to love us,
Where our little Robbie died:
Still in memory blooms the redbud
By the doorway, and the breeze
Tingles with the spicewood's odor
And the catbird's melodies.

And I mind the floor of puncheons,
Rudely laid on joist and sill,
And the fireplace shaped and beaten
From the red clay on the hill;
With the chimney standing outside,
Like a blind man asking alms,
Wrought of sticks and clay and fashioned
By the builder's ready palms.

Half way up the flue, wide-throated,
Does the hickory crosstree rest,
Whence depend the pot and kettle,
Where the great fire blazes best.
Oh! I smell the savory venison,
Hear the hominy simmer low,

As my Mary stirs the embers
That were ashes long ago.

Once again I hurry homeward,
When the day of toil is o'er,
And my heart leaps up in gladness,
For in this wide open door,
Mary in her homespun habit,
With her hand above her eyes,
Gazes all around the clearing
Till my coming form she spies.

'Tis for her I am a hunter,
And the fleet deer's sudden bound
Tells how swift and sure my aim is,
Ere his life-tide dyes the ground;
'Tis for her I am an angler,
And the spotted beauties woo
From their paradise of waters,
Ere the sun has dried the dew.

And the wild rose and the bluebell
That I pluck with gentle care,
Are for her who rules the cabin—
Mary, of the raven hair;
'Tis for her I smite the forest
Day by day with myriad blows;
'Tis for her the cornstalk tassels,
And the golden pumpkin grows.

Often, winding through the woodlands,
Neighbors come with song and shout,
Eager for a day of pleasure
Where the latch-string hangeth out,
And with ready hands assist us
At our labors, while the zest
Of our conversation heightens
Till the sun goes down the west.

Aye, and once again I see them,
On a sad, sweet summer day
When the robin on the maple
Seems to sing his soul away;
And the clearing swims around me
In a tangled dream of woe,
And my weeping Mary whispers,
"Tell me why he had to go?"

"Why he had to go?" O Heaven!
"Did God want our little boy?"
'Tis the old, unanswered question,
Cankering in the heart of joy,
And subduing many a pleasure,
As I see those friends of old,
Hiding tenderly our darling
In the forest's virgin mold.

Now, that cabin in the clearing
Is but dust, blown here and there,
Where the palpitating engines
Breathe their darkness on the air;
Where my forests towered in beauty,
Now a smoky village stands,
And the rows of factories cluster
Grimly on my fertile lands.

Scarcely room enough is left me
For this double, clustering rose,
Where the baby and its mother
Side by side in earth repose;
Soon the last fond trace will vanish
Which proclaims that they have been;
But no matter—heaven's gateway
Opened wide to let them in.

Yet with Mary oft I linger,
Where the well-sweep slanteth low,

Planning over all our labors,
When to plant and what to sow,
How to ride to Sunday meeting—
Fixing on a proper day
For the rolling and the quilting,
And the young folks' evening play.

"Eighty, and a memory only!"
Is that what you speak of me?
Well, the memory is a blessing,
And its pictures fair to see;
While the fairest and the sweetest
Lingers with me evermore—
'Tis the cabin in the clearing,
And my Mary at the door.

THE PIONEER

His form is bent, his head is gray,
His limbs are long and slender;
But still beneath his woolen vest,
The heart is true and tender.

His comrades long are in the clay;
Their wooden head-boards rotten;
And in the modern neighborhood,
Their very names forgotten.

He walks serenely thro' the fields;
Old shadows seem to follow,
Again he sees the tawny deer
Go leaping down the hollow.

He hears once more the rifle's ring,
The hunters shouting gladly;
On yonder hill the wounded bear
Again gives battle madly.

He hears the pheasant's booming drum,
He hears the turkey calling;
The thudding maul, the ringing axe,
The crash of timber falling.

He sees the little cabin home,
The tiny patch of clearing,
Where once he dwelt with wife and boys,
No breath of evil fearing.

"Ah, well!" he sighs; "she's sleeping now;
The eldest boys are with her:
I very soon shall go to them,
Since they may not come hither."

The tear that glistens in his eye
Falls down a moment after;
For, silvery, echoing up the lane,
He hears his grandchild's laughter.

The past and present strangely blend
Before his mental vision;
Yet love, that makes the dreary wolds
Appear like fields elysian,

Still paints along his early days
The fairest scenes of pleasure,
And garners stores of happy thought
No rhythmic art can measure.

No words bespeak his heart so warm
As did the backwoods greeting;
No preacher has such power as he
Who held the backwoods meeting.

He knows of many a merry time
At reaping, rolling, raising,
Or, on the jolly husking nights,
With cheerful torches blazing.

From many a good wife's quilting bout
He treasures home-spun blisses,
Where old folks talked, and young folks played
Their games of forfeit kisses.

The lazy Indian still he scorns,
His squaws and his papooses;
He thinks, God made them; but, no doubt,
For undiscovered uses.

Where now a dozen turnpikes stretch
Stiff lines between the meadows,
He knew a single Indian trail
That wound thro' forest shadows.

A dozen villages he sees
Beside their railroad stations,
Where once a single trading post
Supplied the settlers' rations.

A hundred rushing trains go by;
He hears them scream and thunder,
And laughs to think how they'd have stormed
His backwoods world with wonder.

"How strange the ways they practice now,
This new time emphasizing,"
He says, and with the uttered thought,
Grows loud soliloquizing:

"With chattering instruments at church,
And dapper youngsters preaching,
And for the congregation's hymn,
A dozen lassies screeching.

"And then for all our social joys,
And good old-fashioned greetings,

The sinners mask at fancy balls,
The saints at bible meetings.

"You rest at ease in fancy homes,
Your thoughts on high careering;
But give me back my wife and boys,
And give me back my clearing,

"And give me back my rifle gun,
My forests, deer, and pheasants
And I will prove you, any day,
As tame as British peasants.

"Your girls grow fine; your boys grow proud
And vain; oh, more's the pity!
There's scarce a youth in all the land
But's crazy 'bout the city.

"It's true some boys who grow up now—
Pale, thin, unlikely creatures,
With foreheads broad and dwindled limbs,
And strange, thought-sicklied features,

"Might well be doctors, if they would,
Or preach without much harming,
But all the stoutest, brightest ones
Should steady stick to farming.

"Give me the lad with sinewy arm
For box or wrestle, ready
To lift his share at hand-spike end,
Or hold a rifle steady,

"And I will after show a man
Whose heart is tender, human,
And brave in every hour of need,
And true as steel to woman.

"But I, why should I moralize?
I'm but a dotard growing,
And death cuts now a reaper's swath
Beside his ancient mowing.

"It seems so strange, the forests gone;
The very stumps are rotten,
And half the fields I helped to clear
I've really now forgotten.

"The post-horse, lagging with his load,
Across th' unbridged morasses,
He reached us once or twice a month
With letters for the lassies.

"But now they run on flying wheels,
Or fly on lightning pinions,
And in the twinkling of an eye
Arrive from far dominions.

"For church and school-house, once a hut
Of logs did half the county,
But heaven as freely then as now
Dispensed her largest bounty.

"We flailed the wheat with twisted sticks;
By steam you thresh and clean it,
And rush your four-horse reapers where
We used to hook and glean it.

"But why go on this cat'logue style
With what we did, and you do;
We did the best we could, and that's
The way in knowledge you grew.

"The old folks labored long and well
To build the rude foundation,
And you have wro't no more than we
With all your cultivation.

"We conquered forests, cleared the land;
Our work, let no man scorn it;
But you who follow, follow well;
Complete, refine, adorn it.

"The olden music, olden songs,
The pioneer rejoicings,
Still linger on my listening ear
With myriad happy voicings.

"No wives are like our dear old wives,
No neighbors like our neighbors,
No boys are half so bold as ours,
So cheerful at their labors.

"No ladies in their rustling silks
And gimcracks half so winning,
As were our girls in linsey frocks
From yarn of their own spinning.

Full many a rough, unseemly man
Who shared my early labor,
Looks noble through the mist of years,
For was he not my neighbor?

"And so when all your heads are white,
And death comes creeping nearer,
You'll deem the old ways, perfect ways,
And hold your old friends dearer."

A partridge whistled by the way,
A blackbird trilled above it,
A redbird sang "O, sunny day,"
The robin "How I love it!"

"Ho!" cried the pioneer, "you birds
Are bent on early pillage,"
And so, his musings spoiled, he walked
Quite briskly toward the village.

1870

THE SUGAR MAPLE

The bright magnolia spreads its bloom
And loads the air with sweet perfume,
And gives a thousand charms unknown
To any but its native zone;
The olive and the fig tree stand
Along the slopes of that fair land,
Wherein, of old, the Jewish maids
Were wooed and won; their ample shades
Have fallen round kings and prophets old,
With silent blessings manifold.
But though we yield the blissful powers
Of olive shades, magnolia bowers,
And where the vine and fig tree grow,
See plenty smile on all below,
No better, fairer trees are they,
When decked in summer's glad array,
And when the ripening autumn time
Bequeathes its wonders to the clime,
They ne'er present such canopy
Of waving leaves and brilliant dies,
In myriad optic harmonies,
To contrast with the sober skies,
As our own sugar maple tree.

What though for Afric's sons the palm
May yield its shade, the hermit's psalm
Of old Armenian origin,
Be heard its sunny bowers within,
Or birds of strange and gorgeous plume,
Fresh from the tropic lands that bloom
With countless flowers of loveliest dies,

Pipe from its crest their harmonies,
Yet no superior shall it be
To our own sugar maple tree,
Whereon the blackbird tunes its lay,
The mocking bird and speckled jay
Grow garrulously loud and gay.

The rugged pine, the mountain fir,
The cypress sad, and juniper,
The orange, with its fruit of gold,
And the Libanian cedars old;
The banyan tree whose living dome
And shaft and pillar form the home
Wherein, reclined at lazy ease,
The Asian views his summer seas;
All these are lovely, all are fair,
But none the coronet may wear;

No stately monarch of the wood,
That lords it o'er the solitude;
No giant oak whose sinews form
The ship that rides the ocean storm,
No stately tulip waving high
His cups, against the summer sky,
Shall bear the crown nor honored be
Beyond our sugar maple tree.

When first the sun begins to warm
The sleeping earth's long frozen form,
And bearing on his northern way,
To melt the icicles by day
Which winter, still with equal might,
Congeals and forms again at night;
O! who shall name in scornful mood
That sweet, delicious, glorious flood,
That perfect saccharinean sea,

That floweth from the maple tree?
Not he, who nurtured in the west
Of memories that he deems the best,
Reveres the sweet unselfish joys
Of rustic girls and hardy boys,
Where fell in fleecy clouds the damp
Evaporations from the camp,
And where the work was cheered along
With mingled jollity and song,
And when the sugaring off was done,
Such sweets were known and heights of fun
As are but rightly understood
By him, who, in some northern wood,
Has scooped the primal sugar trough,
Presided at the stirring off,
Known every labor, every joy
That waited for the rustic boy,
Through all the year, till March should bring
The sugar-making and the spring.

Let not the puny despot boast
His vaunted sweets, that are the cost
Of labor driven by the lash,
Red with the gore from many a gash,
Where human chattels toil in pain
To rear the sugar-yielding cane;
When by the cheerful work of hands
That never felt the hissing brands
That mark the currency of hell,
Where planters buy and traders sell,
Here, in this northern bower, is wrought
A more luxurious sweet than aught
The world had ever known until—
A good return for many an ill—
The Indian skilled in savage ways
By rude example taught the free
Forefathers in the forest days,

While yet the May Flower sped the sea,
The merits of the maple tree.

To grace thy trunk, as I have seen
Glad children on the wooded green
Round some favorite tree entwine
Flowers and grass, and bits of vine,—
So with little skill I've wrought
This, my wreath of rhyme, and brought
Leaf and bud and branch to thee,
Glorious Sugar Maple Tree.

1857

THE SPELLING SCHOOL

Level silence on the landscapes,
Silence shrouding all the hills,
Lies the white robe of the winter,
Hushing all the laughing rills.

But a voice of song and laughter
Cheerier far than brooklets make,
Echoes down the beaten highway,
Scares the wild hare to the brake;

And the merry sleigh bells tinkle,
Chiming to a wordless rhyme,
While the voices of the sleighers
With the melody keep time.

It is by the country school house,
At the crossing of the roads,
That the drivers stop their horses,
And discharge their precious loads.

All the bells have ceased their music,
And the sleighs have ceased to run,
But within the district school house
All is jollity and fun.

Hark! the warning word is given,
"Silence all!" the teacher cries,
And the champions take their stations,
Followed by a hundred eyes.

One, a rosy little maiden,
Just arrived at "sweet sixteen,"
'Tother, lad of eighteen winters,
Overgrown, and shy and green.

See! the saucy little lassie,
Throws the ferule in the air,
Whispering to her stout opposer,
"Catch it, Jemmy, if you dare."

Jemmy hears the words and blushes,
Blushes till his eyelids close,
Makes a pass to catch the ferule,
Misses it and hits her nose.

Just as quick as thought can travel
Runs a titter round the room,
And the choosers end their trial
With the handle of the broom.

"Choice is mine," cries Jem, elated,
Half forgetful of his shame,
Gazes round the room a moment,
Calls aloud the favored name.

Then the merry maiden chooses,
And thus round and round they go,

Till the spellers all are chosen,
Counting fifty in a row.

Now the war of words commences,
And the lettered soldiers stand
Forth to fight like ancient warriors,
One for each opposing band.

Lassie, in her seventh winter,
Eyes of blue and hair of brown,
Stands opposed to man with whiskers,
Bravely meets and spells him down.

Tiny boy, with lisping utterance,
Eight years old a week ago,
Reigns triumphant, till he conquers
Half the long opposing row.

Lad with sandy hair defeats him,
Stands and spells and spells away,
Ah! the little maid is vanquished,
Awkward Jemmy's gained the day.

Little hands are clapped together,
Feet are stamped upon the floor,
Till the master orders silence
And the fight begins once more.

Cupid, roguish little fellow,
Now is busy round the room,
Whispering gently to the maiden
Words that set her cheeks abloom;

While he puts the hearts a throbbing
Under half the woolen vests,
That are buttoned round and over
Boyish forms and manly breasts.

Words of love uncouth are spoken,
Yet with meaning pure and chaste,
And the brawny arms encircle
Many a little tapered waist.

But in vain the watchful tutor
Seeks to find the lovers out,
Arms withdraw and tongues are silent
When the teacher comes about.

O! what happy dreams are woven
For the future, fair and bright,
And what promises contracted
For the coming Sunday night.

Now the Spelling School is over,
And the sleighs are out of sight,
And the bells, the songs, the laughter,
Die away into the night.

I am left alone and dreaming
Of the spelling schools of old,
And the maid whose smiles I valued
More than e'er my lips have told.

Here's to memory of the spellings
And their rounds of sinless joys,
For the merry homespun maidens
And the noble country boys!

1858

THE SETTLERS

Read at a Reunion in 1883

Fathers and mothers of our native land,
I hail you, through the mists of passing years,
And fain would grasp each labor-hardened hand
And speak a blessing to your listening ears;
For ye are blessed that your toils have won
Far better fruit than any idle praise;
And, as you calmly face life's setting sun,
You know the peace that follows well-spent days.

You found a wilderness of mighty woods,
Thick set with giant trees and tangled vines,
With brush and weeds; where all the vernal floods
Of drift-choked streams, o'erflowing their confines
Of bank and channel, filled the oozy swamps,
Stagnated and grew foul in summer heat,
Bred torrid fevers, agues, frigid cramps,
Till death came oft to darken and defeat.

But we who follow, where your hands have wrought,
See smiling cities, hamlets, fruitful fields,
School, church and college, homes of cultured thought,
And every good a generous progress yields:
And so we bow to you, gray pioneers,—
Strong men, brave women of the early days!—
Ye came and conquered by your toils and tears,
And now this garden land shall speak your praise.

Gone are the tangled woods, the swamps no more
Breed pestilence, but blossom like the rose,
And happiness and health reign, where of yore
The hardy settler battled fever foes.
Gone are the drifts, the river floweth free
By farms that smile in morning's golden light;
With his long howl of wailing deviltry
The wolf no more sends shivers through the night.

But lost with these is much of highest worth,
The broad, unstinted welcomes of the past,
The hospitality that blessed the earth,
The generous love, unwearied to the last,
That held a neighbor's weal beyond your own,
The mutual interest, linking heart to heart
In truer compacts than the world had known,
Or dreamed, or taught, or typified in art.

Your cabin homes, with rudely-puncheoned floors,
Wherein the great wheels hummed their busy tunes,
Ne'er on the weary wanderer closed their doors
With selfish coldness, but the precious boons
Of cheer and sympathy you freely gave
And such small comforts as were at command,
While with your outer latch-strings there did wave
A welcome ever warm, from heart and hand.

Gone with the latch-strings are the welcomes old,
And formal manners now usurp the place
Once filled by love; but yet some fadeless gold
Of early days survives; the tender grace
Of many true and priceless things are ours,
Bequeathed from happy homes of "Auld Lang Syne;"

Nor are we all unworthy of your powers,
O, pioneers! whence sprung our Hoosier line.

And so, dear elder friends, we honor you
And love you more and more as years increase;
With you rejoice whene'er your souls renew
Themselves in these fair days of hope and peace:
Look round you! All these teeming lands proclaim
Your deathless honor; these your hands have sown,
Shall bud and blossom to each settler's fame;
For they are yours, gray pioneers, alone.

No matter who the title bonds may hold,
The settler's deed outranks and waives them all:
His toils and sufferings weighed against the gold
Of paltry purchase make its value small:
To him the largess of the fields belong,
The mellow music in the odorous air,
The scene of triumph when the rustic song
Wafts home the harvest, ends the reaper's care.

His are the happy children in the street,
The groom and bride who at the altar stand;
His are the toils of busy hands and feet
That cultivate and beautify the land;
For long ago he won them in the fight
With untamed wilderness and savage beast;
And while his eyes still know the sun's glad light,
On earth's best things should soul and body feast.

And so we cry, God save the pioneers!
The salt of all our goodly land are they,

Preserve and bless them through the circling years
And let them tarry with us many a day;
And when, at last, each toil-scarred veteran falls
Out from the ranks, let honor crown his rest,
And, written upon the imperishable walls
Of heavenly hope, his name be ever blest.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

Life treads on life, and heart on heart—
We press too close in church or mart,
To keep a dream or grave apart.
—ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

URANIA

O Urania! I whisper thy name with a sigh,
For I know that the moments are hurrying by,
That the ages are chasing and hurrying by.

And I know I shall wander with thee but a day,
And the day like a shallop is sailing away,
And thy life like a shallop is fleeting away.

A fairy white shallop, keel, rudder and sail
All enwove of the gossamer found in a vale,
Of the gossamer found in a fabulous Vale.

In a fabulous Vale where the sensitive trees
Shade an avenue leading to fairest of seas,
While they throb to the pulse of that fairest of seas.

O Urania! thy life is a musical tone
From the harp of an angel that sings by the throne,
Of an Angel enchanted by Allah's high throne.

As you fade from my sight, as your loss I deplore,
Still it sings in my soul as you fade evermore,
And your life to my life gathers sweet evermore:

And no lark ever sings to the beautiful sky
But in dreams my Urania is wandering by,
But I see the white mist of your garments go by.

O Urania! the earth and the air and the sea
And the infinite spaces are vocal with thee,
And the sunset and moonrise seraphic with thee.

'Tis but dust that is fading beyond our control,
And Urania forever is queen of my soul,
And thy love makes my heaven, O, queen of my soul!

And no morning forever and ever shall rise
But my soul shall be bare to thy sweet azure eyes,
Shall be naked and white to thy questioning eyes.

"'TIS MORNING AND THE DAYS ARE LONG"

I had a dream of other days;
In golden luxury waved the wheat;
In tangled greenness shook the maize;
The squirrels ran with nimble feet,
And in and out among the trees
The hang bird darted like a flame;
The cat bird piped his melodies,
Purloining every warbler's fame:
And then I heard triumphal song,
"'Tis morning and the days are long."

They scattered roses, strewed the palms
And shouted down the pleasant vales;
I heard a thousand happy psalms,
And, laughing, wove a thousand tales
Of mimic revelry and joy;
They mocking well the worldly great—

Each tan-faced girl and barefoot boy,
Dear shapers of my early fate—
And then again the Æolian song,
"'Tis morning and the days are long."

Far winding past the storied town,
The river ran through bosky groves,
Its flood we sailed our vessels down
Full freighted with a myriad loves:
Our souls went floating to the gales,
With scarlet leaves and shreds of bark;
We named them cutters, schooners, sails,
And watched them fade in shadowy dark,
Then down the waters flowed the song,
"'Tis morning and the days are long."

O, morning! when the days are long,
And youth and innocence are wed,
And every grove is full of song,
And every pathway void of dread,
Who rightly sings its rightful praise,
Or rightly dreams it o'er again,
When cold and narrow are the days,
And shrunken all the hopes of men,
He shall rewaken with his song
"The morning when the days were long."

There palpitations wild and sweet,
The thrills of many an old delight,
And dimpled hands that lightly meet,
And hearts that tremble to unite,
Arise upon the rosy morn,
Pass down the lovely vales and stand
The picture of a memory born,
The mirage of a lotus land—
A land where once we trolled the song,
"'Tis morning and the days are long."

LOOKING TOWARD THE SUNSET

The morn is past, the afternoon
With deep'ning shadows lies before;
Behind me throbs the ardent June,
The summer is for me no more:
No more to dream
By lake and stream
In life's sweet matin time, I stand
As one who wails
Beneath sad sails
That bear him from his native land.

O, ceaseless toil and deathless hope!
Ye have been mine through all the past;
E'en while the future's widening scope
With clouds and doubt was overcast,
You were to me
The legacy,
The crown, the guerdon, the reward,
The refuge sought
By tireless thought,
The cicerones of the patient Lord.

O, eager childhood, youthful prime,
And happy, happy, prattling days,
When all my raptures flowed in rhyme,
Half given to love and half to praise,
Ye fade away,
As fades the day!
The sunset land before me lies;
O'er heart and soul
The sad waves roll
That bear me under alien skies.

But yet at times the shadows lift,
And with the frenzied touch of old,
I seize the wayward harp and drift
In fancy's atmosphere of gold;
I move along
The ways of song
And wander onward night and day;
O'er sweetest tides
My shallop glides,
My ship, song-wafted, sails away.

By temples old and classic vales,
By summer isles and murm'ring streams,
Where mountain forests breast the gales,
By coasts, where sea and land are dreams,
'Neath sun and star
I journey far,
And bear no burden, scrip nor staff;
Unsandaled, fleet,
My eager feet
Fly onward where the shadows laugh.

The shadows laugh, the night is wild.
The stars go singing in the sky;
The dead return; an angel child
Invites my dreaming soul on high,
And child and soul,
In joy's control,
Through fields elysian float and hear
The notes that move
The tides of love
In song's diviner atmosphere.

I murmur everywhere and make
The echoes messengers of words
Disjoined from thought, as tides that break,
Or the half-warbled songs of birds

That leave no trace
In time nor space;
As films of sun-kissed cloud that fade
And are no more;
As some fair shore
Of mirage sunk in instant shade.

And so I pass from night to day
And day to night, in mimic round,
The child of wayward fancy's play,
The willing slave to rhythmic sound,
And softly glad,
Or wildly sad,
The notes that tremble o'er my heart
Still keep alive,
In thought's full hive,
The bees that ply love's honeyed art.

THE POET'S REED

When young Apollo, from the heavens cast down,
Stripped of all splendor and his robe of light
Torn from him by the thunderer's royal hands,
Walked on the earth—a god without a crown,
Leading Admetus' herds across the sands,
Through ragged deserts and uncultured lands,
With cries and plaints he wearied not the night.

He wearied not the night nor vexed the day
With vain repinings nor discordant woe,
But plucked a reed which stood in bannered pride
Beside the sylvan stream's enchanted way,
Wrought it into a flute, which, wonder-eyed,
Held fast by longings new, unsatisfied,
The savage shepherds heard him blow and blow.

The immortal artist, painting with his flute,
His breath for pigment, for perspective sound,
Woke answering echoes from the rocks and plains,
And placid waters which till then were mute,
Save to discordant winds or noisy rains,
Soothed man the beast with his delightful strains,
Till man the soul his sense of being found.

From wonder passed the shepherds to delight,
Delight grew into interest, interest thought,
Then many reeds were plucked and wrought and blown,
With stunning discords, till, by patience taught,
The god within each breast stood up alone
Answering Apollo's music with his own,
And earth had something from the heavens caught.

And thus came art from heaven, when earth was young,
Cast downward by the thunderer, as in wrath,
Its form a god's in banishment, its need
Asserted not by any muse's tongue
Nor seven-stringed phormix, but by simple reed,
Broken and bruised and made to cry and bleed
And murmur down the musky zephyr's path.

THE GUEST

THERE'S a bird that stays with us the whole winter long,
And gladdens our hearts with its beautiful song ;
Its plumage is plain and its notes are not loud,
Nor would they excite the applause of the crowd ;

Yet, somehow, we love it and cherish it so,
That when other birds fly it refuses to go.

Its songs are strange questions and gentle replies,
Set to music as soft as the light of the skies,
With a hint, here and there, of Promethean fire,
And some notes from Pan's reed and the old
Orphic lyre,
But so mixed and mingled with plain homely
things,
That critics and pedants despise all it sings.

No bird of the wildwood was ever so free,
No prison-bound warbler so hampered as he:
Now soaring he sings with the sweet English
lark,
Now tremblingly pipeth sad notes in the dark,
Or, casting a backward glance over the snow,
In the treble of age, chants the sweet long ago.

But more often his notes are as glad as the woods
When spring bursts the buds and unlooses the
floods;
He sets children romping with innocent joy,
And gives the old gray-beard the heart of a boy;
The matron reneweth her youth in his strain
And feels the sweet coyness of girlhood again.

And so, with our blessings, he ever remains,
When summer rejoices, when winter complains;
We love him and cherish him more as the years
Run past us and leave us their sadness and tears,
And smile with content at the critical scowl
Of the pedant who swears that our bird is an
owl.

PARTED

A WHITE 'kerchief shaken afloat
By the tremors of one pretty hand,
And a boy with his heart in his throat
At the edge of the wave on the sand:

She kisses her soft finger tips
To the sorrowful lad on the shore,
And her shallop goes out mid the ships
But returns its fair burden no more.

The sun has gone down in the west
And the winds and the sea are at peace,
But the lad stands and beats on his breast
And his sorrow has never surcease.

There are cargoes and sailors and ships,
And the balm blowing in from the isles,
But alas! for two warm ruby lips
And two dimples that melt into smiles,

And alas! for the slight, fickle mind
That forgets amid flatterers and ease
The brown country lad, left behind,
With his yearning outreaching the seas.

SONNETS

THE SILENT LAND

When the soul's scepter falleth from the hand,
The nerveless hand, grown icy cold and still,
What power can execute the spirit's will?
What force respond to any sweet command?
That we may question, this we cannot know;
Nor yet to what far realms freed spirits go,
When they no longer sup from dregs of woe.
Ah, blessed land! where time's exultant flow
Leaveth us stranded; where the breeze doth blow,
From holy heaven's enchanted isles of bliss,
To heal our wounded spirits with its kiss,
And waft us to the better life that is
The joy of Love's perpetual synthesis,
The gladness we shall never cease to know.

TO A ROBIN FOUND DEAD IN THE SNOW

Wast tired of the south and the song of the sea,
  Gentle herald of spring, that thou temptedst the cold,
And cam'st back to hasten the sap in the tree
  With thy love-making measures so tenderly bold?
Now thy merry "good morning!" shall hail us no more,
  Since starvation and storm have bestowed upon thee,

As on many a bard in the years gone before,
That silence which speaketh of things that shall be,
With a pathos surpassing the grief of the sea,
Or thy tenderest note when this brown wing was free;
For men will be moved by the stillness of death,
Who never were softened by song's rhythmic breath
As it heralds the spring when she first wanders forth
To kiss into bloom the sheathed buds of the North.

DEW-DROPS ON WAYSIDE WEBS

Oft have I walked, when morn was on the land,
And seen bright gems, like stones from broken stars,
Or globes of gathered rays from ardent Mars,
Or spheres of nectar, dropped by beauty's hand
From the tuberose's heart, caught in the net
The spider for the vagrant fly has set;
And, blessing much the sunlight falling through
And glorifying thus the drops of dew
I turn me to the spiders' webs, all wet
Upon the wayside grasses, left and right:
"These are," I sigh, "such nets as youth doth weave
To catch fame, honor, riches, in their flight,
Which, even when most successful, but receive
Some fading bubbles touched with borrowed light."

FRAGRANCE

A THRILL of something seeming half divine,
Ethereal essence, like the perfect thought
The poet knows of, but can ne'er design
A web of words wherein it may be caught;—
Intangible, and yet pervading all,
Bathing the senses in a nameless joy;
A globe of ecstacy that in its fall
From some remoter world, the rosy boy
Has caught and blown to us, in viewless spray,
To waft us gently to the dreamy shore
Whereon the roguish archer beareth sway;
And when 'tis sweetest still we yearn for more,
E'en while the rhythmic pulses flow along
The happiest staves of summer's odor song.

THE SILENCE OF MIDNIGHT

PEACE! gentle goddess, sleep is on the shore;
The tuneful herds are silent by thy hill,
The little bardlings of the eve are still,
Their chattering discords vex thy soul no more;
The last lorn lover's serenade is o'er;
The mousing owl now flitteth where he will;
The musquash frolics by the meadow rill;
The stream o'erflows its dam with sullen roar,
And trickles through the forebay at the mill;
Great Aldebaran beameth like an eye,
Huge Ophiuchus bears the writhing snake:
How wildly startling, were a human cry
To wake the echoes, now, of earth and sky!
Break but the silence, and the spell shall break!

THE QUEST OF THE SOUL

Amid all scenes of pleasure voices fall
From some far region, some diviner part
Of this wide universe, and seem to call,
To call and woo us with resistless art;
And, listening to their sweetest melody
Of joys beyond, and endless days to be,
The soul upsoareth on impatient wings
To some far shore, some land of wood and stream,
Where sound the songs that no man ever sings,
Where on the living, palpitating strings
Of lyres immortal as the hands that play
The dream of music is no more a dream;
Where hopes and loves that thrill our forms of clay,
And die away, as torches in the night,
Shall rise again like spirits of the day
To breathe upon us all their old delight.

AN AUTUMN SUNSET

'Twas a glorious eve in Autumn,
All the sky was grand with clouds,—
Here, like mounts of gold and amber,
Yonder rich vermillion curtains,
There like infants' snowy shrouds;
Like a dim lamp in a chamber
Of some mighty ancient palace,
Swung the red sun in the distance,
Low and lower down the west:
Twilight poured her mystic chalice,
Into all our longing spirits,
As he leaned his monarch forehead
On the night's ambrosial breast,
Closed the evening scene in splendor
And departed to his rest.

AN OLD THANKSGIVING

If turkey failed and beef was tough,
With toil and debt increasing,
We sighed not, but we ate enough,
And laughed because the times were rough
And care's demands unceasing.

Beyond the clouds the future stood
With gifts of joy or sorrow;
We trusted God to make them good,
And waited still, in thankful mood,
The dawning of the morrow.

"Things might be worse," the father said;
"Hope darkened more," said mother;
"The household memories are not dead,
The household angels have not fled—
God saves us to each other."

And so that old thanksgiving day,
In doubt and darkness rising,
Was full of praise, and love's sweet way
Held over all its gentle sway,
Our souls in joy baptizing.

O, not from pleasure's idle reign,
Nor luxury's soft condition,
Uprises praise that sweetens pain,
And faith that ripens souls like grain
For harvest fields elysian.

Thanksgiving in the humble home
Where toil and care are neighbors

Brings down, somehow, from kingdom come
A peace that lightens sorrow's sum
And blesses rudest labors.

Despise no day of little things,
No joy in lowly station!
For toilers may be more than kings
To Him "who giveth prayer its wings
And faith its coronation."

And in the happy years that lie
Beyond the shadowy river,
The souls that rather sing than sigh
May still be blessed and gladdened by
Thanksgiving days forever.

THE EMPTY NEST

I HOLD within the hollow of my hand
A little nest of twigs and wool entwined
By some wee mother that has fled the land,
And left but storm and winter winds behind.

Child of the Summer, she to Summer gave
Her happy singing offspring, and behold!
They flit with Summer over land and wave,
And warble in her atmosphere of gold.

I hold within the casket of my soul
The empty nest where many hopes were born
That fled beyond my eager youth's control,
And left me lonely, sorrowing and forlorn.

Children of youth, with youth they ever fly,
But never fold their wings in any cage,
Divinely sing in boyhood's happy sky,
But flee from the chill atmosphere of age.

A LITTLE MAID OF TWO

A SMILING face, a dimpled chin,
Some tender eyes of blue;
Wherefore is she condemned for sin,
My little maid of two?

She runs to meet me up the path,
Her graces mine renew;
'Tis false, she is no child of wrath,
This little maid of two.

Her little hand is on my cheek,
It thrills me through and through;
My lips refuse awhile to speak,
But kiss my maid of two.

"You talk of primal wickedness—
Pray, what has that to do
With all this laughing blessedness,
This little maid of two?"

"Depraved and totally undone,"
I think's about your view;
But when your argument is spun,
Here's still my maid of two.

Her innocence, her artless ways,
Her faith and love so true,
Refute your dogma to God's praise;
This little maid of two.

Ah, me! were all the world as she,
What should the angels do,
But yield their crowns, bestow their palms
On little maids of two!

THE SONG OF THE IMPRISONED THRUSH

O WILD, sweet note! Again I see
  The Western woods of old,
Before the woodman's ruthless axe
  Had turned its strength to gold:
Where nature reared her sylvan throne
  And ruled, in gentlest mood,
The wild life that her hands had sown,
  " The shy things of the wood."

Distinctly falls the pheasant's boom
  Upon my listening ear,
I scent the flow'ring haw's perfume,
  The turkey's call I hear;
The gray has flown from beard and hair,
  The sparrow's song is sweet—
There's youthful vigor in the air,
  And thistles in my feet.

O! softly, like the light of stars
  That makes the blue divine,
Falls through the spirit's yielding bars
  This tremulous song of thine,
Lone prisoner from the wild-wood vale,
  That pinest in thy cell,
But ne'er forget'st the woodland tale
  That none can sing so well.

As he who from Ferrara's cell,
  Where want and hunger dwelt,
Taught all the world the miracle
  Of tuneful joy he felt,

So thou, poor bird, all undismayed
By chaff of curious men,
Fill'st all the world, for us, with shade
And woodland song again.

THE SONG

Far away,
When the June was full of song,
And the days were fair and long,
Where the thickest wild woods stood
Was a tuneful neighborhood;
Chattering blackbirds on the trees
Piping loud their ecstasies,
Sparrows twit'ring by the stream,
And the cat-bird's tangled dream
Of all melodies that make
Bird-songs glad for music's sake;
There two thrushes young and fair
Lived and sang, a happy pair;
Sang and loved and hatched their brood
In that tuneful neighborhood:
Where the hawthorne's tardy bloom
And the linden's rich perfume,
With its hint of honey cells,
And the trumpet flower's red bells
Wooed the wandering pirate bee,
Led their young and joyed to see
How they bravely grew and strong
In that world of love and song.

List! O, idle passer by!
I who sing where tree and sky
And the wood flowers are unseen,
I who sing of what has been
And what may be, I who make
Music for its own sweet sake,

Am of that once happy brood
And that tuneful neighborhood.
Ask me not of parent birds;
Doubt is saddest of all words;
All I know I sing and say
That I came from far away
Came a prisoner for my song—
Artless art that tarries long—
And inspired by all I knew,
In that world so fair to view;
All I knew and all I heard,
By the voice of beast and bird,
Still a prisoner, pining yet
With the pathos of regret,
I repeat the wood notes wild
That the parent taught his child,
Singing to his fledging brood
In that tuneful neighborhood.

CONQUERORS

Who cometh with perfect art
To interpret the song of the heart
That trembles with joy supreme
In the tumult of love's young dream,
  The ages shall crown him king
    Over all the bards of time,
  And the songs that he shall sing,
    Unsullied by lust or crime,
Shall follow the rounds of the sun,
Where the day is never done.
Who writeth the song of faith,
The things that the spirit saith,
At the end of the weary years,—
Of the soul that toils in tears
  On a desolate, thorny way,

All broken and bare, when it sees
That it leads to the gates of day
Where the end is eternal peace,—
In heaven shall sound his lyre
And its notes shall not expire.

HASTE NOT, JOYFUL HOUR

Tarry with us, joyful hour!
Haste not in thy going!
Here within our summer bower
Daintiest bud to fairest flower
Momently is growing.

Whither wouldst thou, happy day,
Down the west declining?
Shout the children at their play,
Youth, that mocketh at delay,
For thy delay is pining.

Haste not, most angelic guest,
In whom the world rejoices!
Paint with Eden isles the west,
Thrill with paradise the breast,
Tune with heaven our voices!

Rest, O time, thy flying feet,
This fruit is unforbidden;
Wife and children round me meet,
Life is fair and love is sweet;
Let them not be chidden!

Linger, O, serenest hour!
Exchanging sun for shadow;
Life is drinking, like a flower,

All thy joy of field and bower
River, hill and meadow.

Stay! But lo! with sudden hush,
The children's romp suspendeth,
The twilight darkens in the bush,
His swift good evening sings the thrush,
And so the rare day endeth.

SHE WAS NOT MADE FOR SORROW

She was not made for sorrow!
When grief came
She cried—for shame!
Why spoil my day?
But I will laugh to-morrow.

She was not made for sorrow!
And when death
Consumed her breath,
He had his way,
But she smiled on the morrow.

A FAREWELL

Lay your cold hand in my warm hand!
You are going far away
From the beauty and the gladness
Of this mellow autumn day;
We shall miss you in the sunshine,
We shall miss you in the shade,
We shall sorrow on without you
When your lowly grave is made.

O! to tell you how we love you,
That in heaven you still might know
All the tender thoughts that linger
In our waiting souls below,
Would we had the poet's magic,
The magician's mystic power,
Till before your eyes should blossom
Our affection in full flower!

Will not heaven be less than heaven
Should no echo reach us there
From the loved ones left behind us
In a world of toil and care?
Should no gentle strains come to us
From the earthly days of old,
Will we not grow weary listening
To the angel harps of gold?

There are dogmatists who tell us
That the blessed souls above
Are so self-contained they heed not
Mortal pain nor mortal love;
That they even might look downward
To the burning lake of hell
Undisturbed, though loved and lost ones
In its fiery depths should dwell.

But I know, O friend departing!
You will never cease to be
In the kingdom of affection,
In the world of sympathy.
Better be a loving spirit
In the midst of doubt and woe,
Than a heartless, cold immortal,
Where the streams of pleasure flow.

You will hear us, you will heed us,
You will know our voices' chime,

Singing in the morning's gladness,
Or the noontide's ardent prime;
You will run with joy to meet us
When we come with eager feet
To the blooming land of promise,
Or fair Salem's golden street.

Fare you well! but not forever;
Though our hearts be sad and sore,
We shall follow, we shall follow,
And our griefs shall haunt no more.
Let my warm face touch your cold face,
Let your heart be close to mine;
Theirs are but some brief pulsations
In a melody divine.

But their pulses time the music
Of twin souls that love the day,
And the blossoms and the bird-songs,
And the poet's roundelay;
One beats strong, one trembles faintly,
While far voices seem to call
Through a mist of light that sweetly
Floweth over Zion wall.

O! I feel your benediction
Resting sweet on heart and brow;
But my eyes must weep the answer,
For my lips are speechless now;
Swiftly lapsing into silence
Goes this dearly cherished clay;
But for thee, O soul! an angel
Swingeth wide the gates of day.

THE BLIND BOY AND THE SPRING

The spring came laughing down the way
Where village children ran at play;
She joined them at their "hide and seek"
And softly kissed the blind boy's cheek.

He felt the pressure of her lips,
It warmed him to the finger tips;
Her breath was on his tangled hair,
And left a tender halo there.

A hint of heaven's benignant grace
Was kindled in the blind boy's face;
His quickened pulses seemed to run
Like insects sporting in the sun;

His spirit sight was apt and keen
For things that eyes have never seen,—
The thrills by which the grasses grow,
The force that makes the pansies blow,—

Each spicy odor from the woods,
The fainting boom of far-off floods,
The shirr of rapid, winnowing wings
And all spring's gladly quickened things,

His fancy clothed with form, and made
Soft pictures of the sun and shade,—
The sun and shade he never saw,
But knew through feeling's subtlest law.

He knew when buckeye leaves unfold,
When burst dandelion's floods of gold

On emerald meadows, when the blaze
Of red buds lights the forest ways;

What time the thrush's hungry broods
Are hatched in sylvan solitudes,
And where the bluebells ring perfume
And gladness through the dead'ning's gloom.

O! oft dispelling grief and night,
Did spirits give the blind boy sight?
Were angels, serving in disguise,
Far more to him than mortal eyes?

I know not; but howe'er it be,
In all things hides a mystery
That compensates for sorest loss
And weaves a crown for every cross.

Let wise men name it as they will,
For me those words are dearest still
That yield all good of time or sense
To God's unslumb'ring Providence.

LITTLE THINGS

A SIMPLE rhyme, a childish grief,
A blossom on a lover's tomb,
A bud expanding into leaf,
A dewdrop in a clover bloom;
How sweet, how sad, how wondrous fair,
How soon forgot, how quick to fade!
The song, the bloom, the infant care,
Pass like the play of sun and shade;

But in their passage quicken thought,—
As sunbeams melt on field and plain

And leave their slightest impress wrought
In blooming grass and ripening grain,—
And though each individual form
Grows indistinct, its glow remains,
A halo round us in the storm,
A genial warmth that fills our veins.

The critic comes with awful frown
To crush the artist, like a gnat;
Frosts nip the tender blossoms down,
And childish griefs, for this and that,
Are merged in sorrow's large estate,
That widens round our frosted heads;
And yet the varied web of fate
Is woven of such slender threads.

The little things of time are most
Secure of influence, promise, power:
The flying seed, the insect host,
Dissolving dew and transient shower;
They multiply, build up, tear down,
And write their excellence and grace
On arid waste and mountain brown,
Till naught is bare nor commonplace.

So little murmurs, joined in song,
Light bubbles that in music break—
When youth is glad and days are long—
In low, soft ecstacies, may wake
The living chords of that sweet lyre
Which trembles in the human heart
And prompts the *genius* to aspire,
The *man* to act a noble part.

Then, scorner, spare the little things!
From atoms all the worlds are wrought,
Peasants may dwindle into kings,
Or wits give birth to humorous thought;

The great be small, the small be great;
And yet through all life's varied throng
This truth holds fast as death or fate,
The humble ever are the strong.

THE MISTLETOE

They kissed beneath the mistletoe
Upon that Christmas day;
They kissed beneath the mistletoe
And then he went away;
He went away, he went to sea,
He sailed on many a ship,
But still the mistletoe was green,
Her kiss was on his lip.

He sailed a score of years and four,
His head was getting gray,
But fortune that had dodged him long
At last was brought to bay,
And came down handsomely in fine
With half six oughts or so;
The ship in which he sailed was called
"The good ship Mistletoe."

He turned unto his men and spoke,
His words were soft and fair,
Of Christmas cheer and wedding bells
And sweet domestic care:
He homeward turned his vessel's prow;
How should the sailor know
That she had sworn herself to Christ
He kissed so long ago.

He sailed across the tropic line,
He saw the great cross fade,

He sailed for home, for happy yule,
For mistletoe and maid:
His soul with rapture overflowed,
His heart was wild with joy;
He capered up and down the deck,
He whistled like a boy.

The bashful moon her image cast
Upon the laughing sea,
He murmured in his sailor way
"'Tis like my bride shall be;"
"I see her image in the wave,
She lights my soul as when
We kissed beneath the mistletoe;
So shall we kiss again."

Entranced by one delightful thought,
He leaned beyond recall;
He fell upon that phantom moon,
'Twas shivered by his fall:
He sank; with sudden motion drawn
The vessel's keel below,
Went warm with love's remembered kiss
Beneath the mistletoe.

They lowered their boats, they searched
the sea,
They chased the shining wave;
But he was on his coral bed
And she was in her grave;
And when that eve at anchor lay
The good ship Mistletoe,
The little port was mourning half
And half in Christmas glow.

The best beloved, the guardian saint
Of all the straggling town
Was underneath the frozen clods

Upon the wintry down;
And there 'neath many a wind-browned thatch
With rafters slanting low,
The brave tar kissed his heart away
Beneath the mistletoe.

AT FORTY

TO ONE BEYOND THE RIVER

YESTERDAY I was twenty, the world was in roses,
No cloud of despair in the etherine sea,
And blessings were plenty as petals in posies,
While fame just stood waiting to crown you and me.

Then fortune held out 'midst the glory of morning
Her fair jewelled hand in the beautiful east,
With beckon and call thrilled us sweet with the warning,
"Come, seize on my treasures, from greatest to least!"

Now Cupid hid slily beneath the sun bonnets
That shaded the brows of some lassies we knew;
I was Moore in their albums, you Shakespeare in sonnets
Addressed to their eyes, sparkling, tender and blue.

My own *rara avis*,—I think you remember
That feathery title I gave Florabel,—
While the Venus of Milo that late one November
You saw in the person of golden haired Nell,—

Ah, well! Shall I say they are forty and florid,
With never a notion of Shakespeare, nor Moore,
Nor the phrensies of poets, but mate with some horrid
And well-to-do bores, as their ma's did before?

You remember the fervor that flamed in our bosoms
As we tilted at slavery, the terrible foe;
Heroical Gracchi we sought the red blossoms
Of radical honors, a score years ago.

We pulled at the ropes and we shouted as loudly
As any who launched the old liberty ship;
Then felt sweetest joy as, her sails swelling proudly,
She flew o'er the waves like a hawk from the slip.

"Ah! boys, you've helped launch her," cried old politicians,
"You've labored, good hearties, when laborers were few,
Now work for your lives for success, scorn divisions,
The future waits radiant with promise for you."

We toiled, we petitioned, we talked and we battled;
The tough rind of slavery was punctured at last,
Then up came the war and the musketry rattled,
And all the sweet heavens were with clouds overcast.

You went to the front, not a leader, poor fellow,
A private were you and a private you fell;
The stars and the eagles, the shoulder-straps yellow,
Were seldom for those who loved freedom too well.

Now low where you sleep still the pine trees are sighing,
Your soul, like John Brown's, has been marching along
Through all of these ten years, while I have been trying
To gain for your memory one poor tribute song.

I'm forty to-day, yesterday I was twenty,
The conflict of ideas, the conflict of arms,
The conflict of interests with all their addenda
Have swept past my youth and destroyed all its charms.

And some wave of time, with most headlong assurance,
Has borne me far off from the happy old days,
Till here at this plain half-way house of endurance
I sit without honor, or fortune, or bays.

Ah, me! When at twenty we long for the battle
And storm of life's earnest campaign to begin,
How little we think to be driven like cattle
Or slaughtered like sheep in the shambles of sin.

How little we guess that in life's rough endeavor
The vulture gains more than the paradise bird,
That over the song of the skylark forever
The howls of the wolf and the jackal are heard.

Rest sweetly, dear friend, not a storm shall awake thee,
Thy pulses to anguish no more shall respond,
No more shall the false and the fickle forsake thee,
For love springs eternal and life lies beyond

This beautiful world, that we men make Gehenna
By selfish ambitions, unhallowed desires,

Uplifting the few and debasing the many,
The high soul repressing, destroying the fires

That genius has kindled on many a pure altar,
Where love and love's author are worshipped alone,
Giving merit to penury, truth to the halter,
And Janus-faced impudence scepter and throne.

Ah, well! it is past, youth is over, I know it,
No more shall the days breathe their olden delight;
When Jove seeks the west, nevermore shall the poet
Go crowned with Arcturus, the prophet of night.

Lost is the lamp's magic, Aladdin, dream spirit,
Builds castles no more, crowns our temples with bays,
Nor whispers us soft of some toil-begot merit
That one day shall bring its reward of true praise.

Yet life's bitter wine is far better at forty
Than nectar youth quaffed in its finest bouquet,
For then all our good lay in creed, sect and party,
But now, thanks to sorrow, we cheerfully say

Whatever God places right plainly before us,—
To rise with the future, or tremble and fall,—
That way shall be ours, while we lift up the chorus,
"From forty 'till death, here's good will unto all!"

Feb. 10th, 1873

ENDYMION

A MEDLEY

Ah, blessed son! thy sleep no dangers mar!
Thou perfect statue, grown from Zeus's self;
Type of all youth and radiant as a star,
Fadeless and fair as morning in the east—
In that delightful east where seraphs dwell;
No witchery of laughing woodland elf,
Nor song of siren at her brutal feast,
May woo thee from thy lofty pinnacle,
Nor cause one tint to flutter on thy cheek—
Thy cheek whose bloom of perfect manliness,
From lofty Latmos to the world shall speak
By that deep silence which doth more express
Than all the energy of gifted tongues,
Of youth and beauty and the length of days
That mortals sigh for, and in myriad songs
Implore and picture, glorify and praise.

I

Youth and beauty are but shadows
Chasing over shaven meadows
On a summer afternoon,
When the films of cloud are sailing
Through the sunlight all prevailing,
Sailing to the measured sweetness
Of that rarest incompleteness—
Perfect, yet an incompleteness—
That we call the heart of June.

II

Youth and beauty touch men's faces
With some fading tints and graces,
While the morning light is high;
When the wine of sensual gladness
Turns to bitter draughts of sadness,
Youth and beauty from us sever
Tho' their shadows linger ever—
Haunting souls of men forever
With a joy that can not die.

O, happy spirit, infinite in wealth!
Joy-breathing spirit, through the countless years
Burst buds of bloom in many alien lands,
Break the wild shadows, sow the morning beams
Roll back the wave, display the tinted shell,
Throw films of verdure over the atoll,
And plant thy daisies on the mountain side!

I

Count me all the floral treasures
Of the lands along the sea,
None are fairer, none are rarer
Than the daisy's bloom to me!
Modest daisy, little daisy!
Blooming in the chilly air
Of these Nor'land mountain places,
Thou art wonderfully fair.

II

There is youth upon thy petals,
Beauty bloometh on thy stem,
Hardy daisy, pretty daisy!
Thou, in Flora's diadem,
Ever more shalt bear a glory,

Be of each great flower the peer,
And the thoughts of men shall bless thee,
Modest little mountaineer.

Fair soul of youth and beauty, thou art more
Than we, who witness thee but through each sense,
Each sense of color, odor, touch and sound,
May idly recognize in thee, for thou
Art primal cause, growth and effect in one.
Thou plantest in the grave with every death,
And in the hideousness of all decay,
The seeds of things that glorify the world,
And they grow into wonderful great joys
That overshadow widely-sundered states.
And some are sentient creatures, fly and sing,
Swim in the waters, walk upon the plains,
Burrow in earth or on the surface crawl.
And other forms have more exceeding grace
Of tint and outline, yet are rooted things
That move not save as wind and flood and frost
And suns and seasons move them, but are thought,
By some, to be inhabited by souls
Which, when exhaled from earth, become the trees,
Fruits, grains and grasses and immortal flowers
That crown the holy hills of paradise
And make its valleys rich with fadeless bloom.

I

Baby mine, baby mine,
Touch my grizzled face
With that little hand of thine—
Touch me, spoil my costliest line
With thy elfin grace!

II

Baby fair and baby sweet,
Thou art in the dawn,
Treading with thy little feet
Where the shadowy things retreat
When the night is gone.

III

Baby, crooning soft and low,
Tell me all thy joy,
How the spirits come and go,
Whisp'ring things no sage shall know
To my baby boy!

IV

Baby mine, baby mine,
Touch my wrinkled face
With that little hand of thine—
Touch me, bring me thoughts divine
With thy childish grace!

And some are spiritual, such as our dull eyes
May not behold while pleased with earthly things,
Nor may our fingers tingle to their touch;
But on the softer cushions of the brain
They leave, at times, their broken images—
Broken and made imperfect by the rough,
Hard usages to which we put the plates
That have received the impress of their forms
Cast by diviner light than light of suns,
Than rays of all the suns that make the day,
Each for his retinue of wheeling worlds.

I

Sing me a song of the broken vow
And the love that is love no more,
Of the robin's lay that is silent now,
And the fruit that is blighted on the bough,
And the footfalls on the floor
Of one who shall come no more.

II

A broken hope and a broken reed,
And broken images, treasured long,
A broken heart, that has ceased to bleed,
And a broken will that does not heed
The memory of a wrong,
Whose cruelty crushes long.

Spirit of youth and beauty! unto thee—
To thee we sing our matins and to thee
Our voices in the vesper hymn shall rise,
And through all time and all eternity
Thy active agency shall still command
The love of every people, every age;
And every creature, mortal or divine,
Or of the lower orders shall be glad
Wherever thou art working out thy joy.

And still on Latmos' height Endymion lies,
—Eternal youth, immortal sleep are his—
Dowered with all blisses that the worlds can give,
Kissed by the singing breezes from the seas,
Blown over by the goddess-haunted air—
The air that stirreth Hippocrene's wave,
Lifts the light bubbles from Castalia's fount
And blows them through the world in mists of song,
Bears the broad pinions of the Hippogriff,

Enwraps the perfect form of Ganymede,
Thrills to the touch of Hebe's jeweled hand,
Moves lifeless strings with Orpheus' dying strain;
Or in the later years from Olive's mount,
Grows musical with words that touch the chords
Of tenderest echo in the human soul,
And through the ages gathering more and more
Of strength and purpose for the general good,
Lift men and nations toward the broader light
Of better thoughts and systems more benign.

Ah! no matter how we move
In our orbs of hate or love,
Nothing shall awake from sleep
Yonder king on Latmos steep.
He whom Zeus has called to rest
From the warm earth's loving breast,
Sleepeth fair and bideth well
In youth's endless miracle.

Hercules, whose dying pain
Rent the Nessian robe in vain,
Was not fair and strong as he
In his youth's long mystery.
Favored shepherds taught by Pan
How to charm the heart of man
With each wildly warbled note
From the reed's enchanted throat
Never dreamed what music flows
From the silence of repose,
Where all sounds and senses blend
Into one immortal end;
Where old age his staff resigns
Flushing into youth's soft lines,
And the grim scythe-bearer lies
Just a babe with laughing eyes.

Call this legend, if you must,
Naught but mythologic rust;
But, 'tis rust of purest gold,
Rich with meanings manifold,
Falling through the mists from far
Like the splendor of a star,
Teaching men this subtle truth:
Death is sleep and sleep is youth;
And if we who hope to wake,
When some happy morn shall shake
All the rock-ribbed hills with song,
Are misguided, blind and wrong,
Still for us the æons keep
This immortal youth of sleep.

MATERNAL LOVE HINTING ITS THOUGHT IN SONG

The mother standeth nearer to the child
Than aught except the soul wherein it dwells,
The all-sustaining, ministering soul of God,
Of which the mother is the minister
Who draws into herself and formulates
All elements of earth, or air, or sun,
That are required to build the pure physique,
The rounded excellence of the perfect form;
Nay, more than this, from all their hidden founts
She gathers up the vital germs that make
The new force of her offspring, and again
The mystery of human life renews.

The father does but quicken, she it is
Who, as the lab'ratorial strength of God,
Fuses the widely-sundered elements
Till the new harmony results; the child

Leaps, struggling up the wonder world of
growth

And yet more marvelous the office seems
The mother fills, wherein from out the soul
That fills and thrills the universe, she draws
The powers, whose limits man can not define,
That gathered in one whole we christen mind,
The spirit that can thread the universe,
Number the systems, weigh the pendulous worlds,
Measure the distances that planets run,
Or dwell securely in a beggar's hut,
Courting the friendship of a mangy dog
Whose thought is scarce inferior to its own.

These powers we can not fathom; these we think
Shall live forever, these the mother draws
From sources that she knows not of, nor deems
Herself God's greatest minister on earth,
The procreatress of immortal minds
Touched deeply with the essence of her own
And of the soul of him her love adores.

Aye! here's a mystery of His handiwork—
How through a slender woman, frail and fair,
The infinite spirit that provoketh life
Binds mortal and immortal into one,
As wheat and straw are grown from the same
seed,
And sends the struggling human to the world
Equipped for growth, for *Laoconian* toils,
For life, for death, for immortality,
For all of frightful, pastoral, sublime,
That standeth forth to front the child of God.

And yet the mother's toil has scarce begun
With her maternity; the infant's cry
Announces wants she quickly comprehends;

And, comprehending them, her former self
Drifts to the rear; the child goes on before.
In all her aspirations, acts, desires,
Love for her offspring leads all other thoughts;
And still she is heaven's holiest minister
To guide the little feet among the thorns,
Or when, to her, in after years they come
All torn and bleeding from their heedless walks,
To bind them up and heal them with her tears
And, haply, woo the wanderers back to peace.

The tender wooings of a mother's love
Win most to heaven, while yet they cleave to
earth,
And gather round her darlings at their play,
Or in the hours when, sin or passion-tossed,
They fain would burst away from her control,
To wander in the thorny wilderness
That vagrant license calls elysium—
The serpent-haunted wilderness of crime—
Or lacerate their feet on burning stones
In the blank desert lands that lie beyond;
She pours her sympathies into their hearts
From that pure fountain only death can seal;
A sympathy admonishing with care,
Striking the error, sparing still the child,
Spurning the wrong, but not the erring one,
And sometimes tripping on its blessed way
To song's light movement, lightening heavy
thought.

POOR BLEEDING FEET

Poor bleeding feet! It seems but yesterday
That ye were plump and rosy in my hands,
And as I held you lightly, I did pray
That never treacherous thorns nor burning sands
Should mar my beauties on the walk of life;

That they should still be perfect, be complete;
That I should never, from unholy strife
Recall my child with burning, bleeding feet.

Poor bleeding feet! anointed with my tears,
How gladly would I wipe your stains away
And heal your wounds, and all the coming years
Direct your steps and lead them not astray.
How gladly would I turn my darling's thought
To purer pleasures, paths that are more sweet
With blessed joys than those by license sought
And whence no child returns with bleeding feet.

Poor bleeding feet! O, God! for their return
I thank thee much; for they are more to me
Than ease or gold, even while they bleed and burn
And I anoint their wounds incessantly,
For once they were as pure as new-blown flowers,
When first with morning light and dew they meet,
And still, through all the sorrow-laden hours,
Though soiled and torn, they are my darling's feet.

Poor bleeding feet! I kiss your wounds away,
And wipe you with my hair, as she of old
The dear Messiah's sinless feet, and pray
That all my child's deep sorrow be consoled,
That purity shall to his heart return,
And innocence find there a safe retreat,
While never more to bleed, nor ache, nor burn,
I set in virtue's paths my darling's feet.

A VERNAL VAGARY

Now the ardent sun advances,
Wooing with his am'rous glances
  Water, earth and atmosphere;
Till they thrill with life before him,
And with bud and bloom adore him,
Spreading all their verdant garments
  In the pathway of the year.

By the brook the red bud flameth,
In the copse the thrush proclaimeth
  Life is sweet and love supreme;
And those musical debaters,
Those incessant agitators,
Merry-hearted, jolly blackbirds,
  Caucus now by swamp and stream.

How their stormy legislation
Aideth love's sweet transmutation
  Do the wrens and robins know?
But if robin never guesses
How the restless blackbird blesses
Those who listen to his music,
  As he wanders to and fro,

Yet my robin bathes his bosom
In the dew that wakes the blossom,
  And his soul outpours in song.
When the day is just uprising
Soundeth far his glad surprising
Eloquence of minstrel story;
  And the echoes linger long

In the youthful soul that knoweth
How love's gentle spring tide floweth
  Into sweeter, fuller play,
As the maple boughs get greener,
And the blue skies grow serener,
While the bloom in all the orchards
  Whitens broadly day by day.

Still the Easter sparrow bringing
Into May his March-morn singing,
  Calleth from their Winter nests
Many happy woodland fairies,
Unto whom this milder air is
Pregnant with sweet provocation
  To the life within their breasts.

Oh! I hear the children calling
Where the evening light is falling,
  And I know the witching Spring
Bringeth some glad intuition
To each budding soul, a vision
Of the bountiful hereafter
  That the ripening years shall bring.

When the crocus breaks its cover,
Yearning toward the light, its lover,
  Till its tender blooms unfold;
Then the soul expands her pinions,
Saileth to the far dominions
Where the poet, lord and master,
  Garners all things new and old,

Into hives that hold all sweetness,
Gardens full of all completeness,
  Airs that breathe and winds that blow
Only hints of love's best pleasures,
Music's most delighful measures,

Such as happy-hearted angels
In the fields of heaven do know.

Somber-garbed as any Quaker,
Now our feathered mischief maker
His mosaic lay repeats;
He, the harlequin of muses,
With eclectic rashness chooses,
Like the imitative poet,
From an hundred author's sweets.

And like many a rhythmic weaver,
This satirical deceiver
Sings no music of his own;
His a cat call, harsh and grating,
Save in this sweet time of mating
That he steals from other warblers
And repeats each tender tone.

I have listened to the patter
Of the April rains that scatter
Wild "forget-me-nots" to meet,
With their azure eyes, the shadows
Of the blue birds in the meadows,
As they twitter forth their welcome
To the Spring's advancing feet.

I have seen the brown hares leaping
Where the last year's dead are sleeping
And the lambkins at their play;
Watched the willow tassels falling,
Heard the striped chipmunks calling,
And I know my youth returneth
On my eager heart to-day.

All my boyhood's sweet emotions,
Tender yearnings, wild devotions,

Thrill me with tumultuous joy;
I'm a grizzled man no longer,
Care is gone and youth is stronger
Than the toil and doubt about me,
While I stand a careless boy.

I shall never know the reason
Why, in this delightful season
Youth returns and age departs;
Why the hand forgets to tremble,
Why our friends no more dissemble,
And we read in honest faces
Things that rise from honest hearts.

Tell me not that this sensation
Comes from vain imagination,
For such dreams are not in vain:
Who shall dare define the real
As divorced from the ideal,
Or despise those tender graces,
Sweet as sunlight after rain!

Song and bloom the heart uplifting,
Warmer sunshine, shadows drifting,
Welcome in the queenly May:
Rise, O soul, be upward winging,
Wiser bards with better singing
Shall rehearse thy vernal welcome
Many a happy future day.

Rise, O soul, thy limitations
Widen with all intimations
That the seasons bring to thee,
Of the boundless love around thee,
Love that never shall confound thee
With a rude or selfish purpose,
Love that floweth endlessly,

Thrilling with its subtle motion
Earth and atmosphere and ocean,
All infinities of space,
With such ecstasy as waketh
Life from dullest clods, and maketh
Of the elemental forces
Budding beauty, blooming grace.

Rise, O soul! to thee is given
Stormy hades, glorious heaven,
Swiftest joy and sharpest woe,
Flowing tears and rippling laughter,
All the present, the hereafter
Blooming from some bud of promise
Blown from heaven long ago;

And the budding, singing seasons
Give thee only sweetest reasons
To assure thy trembling faith
That, beyond all dark disaster,
Love is still the eternal master,
And through all the endless ages
Life is victor over death.

THE REDBUD

CIRCIS CANADENSIS

Beside the rill that hurries down
To join the river's broader flow,
A glorious tree with splendid crown
Warms the chill woods with crimson glow.

The "crow-foot" springs in sunny dells,
On warm south slopes the lambkins play,
The brook into a river swells,
The robin sings at break of day.

And now, before the roses bloom,
A richer rose is in the glen,
Where redbud in the forest gloom
Has lit her vernal torch again.

A thousand coming splendors show
In those soft tufts of crimson flowers,
Prophetic of the ardent flow
Of life and growth in glad June hours.

Where, peeping up from winrowed leaves
Of last year's fall, the stellar eye
Of pale anemone perceives
And greets once more the April sky,

I stand, a child again, and see
The seraph forms of other days
Float 'round the flaming Judas tree
With jocund mirth and cheerful praise.

I count no more the varied store
These budding fields and woods shall bring,
But lightly walk the pleasant shore
Of endless youth and boundless spring.

The buck-eye's leaves are broadly green,
The ash puts forth its tiny hands
Of new-born verdure, while serene–
A gauzy joy—the willow stands.

I hear the squirrel's bark ring out,
The frogs are chattering in the pool,
By lane and field I hear the shout
Of children just released from school.

Spring starts the sap and thrills the blood,
And gives new life and song and cheer
To fill the earth as with a flood
Of budding bliss, but once a year.

So life's warm tides in billows rise
And overflow the soul with joy,
In that sweet season when the skies
Bend fondly down for girl and boy.

To those glad days of ardent life
The redbud's splendor calls us back
From fruitless toil and bootless strife,
To walk again the pleasant track

That leads beneath the rural shade,
Where once we watched the opening spring,
And—eager lad and trusting maid—
Saw hope's sweet swallows taking wing.

Alas! their flight has been too high,
They never perched for you or me;
But still we love the soft spring sky
And bless the crimson Judas tree.

THE BUGLE

Blow, oh, blow the merry bugle!
We shall hear the echoes falling,
Far away along the river,
Like a silvery rill of music
Lightly flowing, gently calling
To our yearning souls to sever
From the baser things that bind them
And come higher up forever.

Blow, oh, blow the winsome bugle!
Like the melody of ages
Flown in some seraphic star-land
Where no guilty soul has entered,

Every note that falls assuages
Savage thoughts, and to the far land
Calls and woos us with the sweetest
Flowers of sound in music's garland.

Blow, oh, blow the mellow bugle!
Over wood and field and meadow
It distilleth limpid sweetness,
And across the enamored waters
Sways and moves each gentle shadow
To the undulating fleetness,
To the tremulous vibrations
Of its melodied completeness.

Blow, oh, blow the inspiring bugle!
Let its ecstasies awaken,
As the evening mists are fading
From the path the sun has painted,
Many sorrowing souls forsaken,
And, their loneliness invading,
Overflow them, fill them, thrill them
With a rapture all pervading.

Blow, oh, blow the happy bugle!
As the birds are homeward flying,
For the mellow, misty lover
In a haze of golden fancies,
Listening to a maid's replying!
Send the music pulsing over
All his spirit,—he will deem it
But the maid's melodious sighing.

Blow, oh, blow the enchanting bugle!
Let it fill the cot and mansion
With a flood of liquid numbers,
Let it penetrate our slumbers,
Till as flowers in full expansion
We shall gather in the treasures,

The intense, uncounted raptures
Of its starlight-breathing measures.

Blow, oh, blow the sorrowing bugle!
As the solemn midnight passes,
When the death-watch ticketh slowly,
And the night-owls, hooting lowly,
Join the awe-provoking masses
That are stronger than affliction,
Let the dead, for whom they echo,
Bless the bugle's benediction.

"HAIL AND FAREWELL"

"Hail and farewell!" We meet and part,
Even with the greeting on our lips;
As those who from some busy mart
See all their wealth go out in ships,
That never come again to shore,
So fade our days to rise no more.

Our three score years are but a span;
We scarcely trill an idle song,
Before the funeral army's van
Passes with muffled drums along;
And sadly then the doleful bell
Moans to the palsied ear, "Farewell."

"Hail and farewell!" The stars go down;
The billows of the rosy dawn
Are breaking on the idle town,
And night's weird armies, far withdrawn,
Fade like gaunt specters down the west,
And hope is strong and love is best.

Yes, hope is strong in newer souls,
And love is best for those who stay;

No more my ship at anchor rolls,
And yours is sailing fast away.
I lose you, for the ocean's swell
Breaks now between us, "Hail, farewell!"

The lamp goes out, the embers die,
Pale Dian tips her silver keel
In some far-hidden reach of sky,
While night and darkness round us steal,
And sorrow sits on every sail;
We cry "Farewell!" but whisper "Hail!"

Beyond the ocean, where the palms
Arise beside the jocund streams,
And love rehearses all his psalms,
And youth renews his happy dreams,
If I may wait your coming sail,
How blessed then the cheerful "Hail!"

THE POET'S NEW YEAR

He was a poet, and his prophet eyes
Were large and dark, and dreamily beheld
Bliss in the fields and wonders in the skies,
Joys for the future, shadowy myths of eld,
Or saw fame templed in a drop of dew,
And Cupid nestling where the violets grew.

The vocal seasons, silent as their songs,
And cold as their dead lovers' empty nests,
Had passed to join the unreturning throngs,
The armies of oblivion's dreamless guests;
And yet the poet tarried, with a tear,
To sing his comfort to the dying year.

And while he lingered, lo! a silence sped
Across the heavens and under all the stars;
The old year made no sign, and he was dead,
Dead in his beauty; neither wounds nor scars
Nor aught that man had wronged him with was there
In his dead face nor on his snowy hair.

A peace abounding as the peace of God
Fell on the poet's spirit, and a thrill
Of instant joy that warmed and spread abroad
Quickened the peace, but made it holier still.
He turned his raptured vision toward the morn,
And knew, at once, another year was born.

"And I have watched," he cried, "the fruitful sun
Rise o'er the gardens of the enamored east,
Heard the last echo when the song was done,
Sipped the best wine at fancy's royal feast,
But never such calm sea of joy as this
Lapped all my soul in gentle waves of bliss.

"Silent is death, and life comes silently,
But joy and music grow with life's increase,
And love, that dreams and hopes abundantly,
Sings the lone song whose echoes shall not cease;
The new springs ever, with rejoicing breath,
To claim the victory o'er decay and death."

O poet! singing to thy happy heart,
Pleased with the bubble that thy breath has blown,
Glad to renew this dear old dream of art
And think it a creation of thy own,

The day is waking, fraud and hate and wrong,
With morn's first blush will drown thy feeble song!

But words of doubt were lost on him. He knew
Of force and murder and the rabble's cry,
And many false gods worshipped, and the true
Messiah still led forth to bleed and die:
"Yet these things ripen," so he said, "the grain
Of love's rich harvest for eternal gain.

"The fields are greener when the storms are past,
The woods are lovelier when the winter flies,
The gloomy day, by shadows overcast,
Presages purer air and sunnier skies,
And every new year brings increase of good
To weld the links of human brotherhood."

Ah, well! He was a poet, and his dream
Ran on in poet fashion, more and more
Inspired, and instinct with the happy theme,—
The endless joy the future holds in store.
He was a poet, and the dawning light
Ripened to noon and faded into night;

Ripened and faded as the bud and leaf,
And many men go on their cruel ways,
The earth is dark with violence and grief,—
Yet hope increases with increasing days,
And each glad poet from his heart of June
Sings every year a more exultant tune.

THE SUMMER

The hills are all shrouded in mantles of snow—
A silence of white, cold and pulseless as death;
Yet, somehow, I hear but the summer winds blow,
And scent the faint musk of the roses' sweet breath.

I wander afar, where his wind-cradled nest
The oriole swingeth aloft to the spray,
When the blossom-crowned June with the wheat in her crest
Bids the robin sing love at the dawning of day;

Where the plowmen go out, when the morning is young,
To stir the fresh earth at the roots of the corn,
And the country lass trills homely airs with a tongue
Unskilled in the language of flattery or scorn;

And the hours move like music the soul loveth best,
To the laugh of the brook and the hum of the bee,
Till the sun's parting smile, as he goes down the west,
Makes the fair river blush from her source to the sea.

O! the world is so fair and the days are so sweet,
That heaven lies yonder a bliss all unsought,
And time moves along on swift, rose-sandaled feet
Like the joy of a poet's divineness of thought.

All summers that ever were vocal with love
Are enshrined in the days that go past like perfume,
And the earth and the air and the heavens above
Are filled with the incense of verdure and bloom.

"All a fancy!" you cry, "see the frost on the pane!"
"Hear the winds howling wildly across the white moor!"
Winds may howl and frosts gather, but gather in vain,
When the hearth blazes bright and safe-closed is the door;

And the spirit is wrapt in the sunlight that lay,
A mist of warm splendor, across the green hill,
When life seemed an odor from heaven at play
With the bird and the blossom, the breeze and the rill.

It is winter, I know, where my footsteps must fall,
But 'tis summer out there where the soul still abides;
Let Christmas bells ring their melodious call!
They ring ebb and flow of the summer's warm tides;

The blessed, sweet summer that dwells evermore
In the mind that adores her and hears but her voice,—
Though the frost etch the pane and the winter winds roar,—
As it sings, without ceasing, "Be glad and rejoice!"

Sherbrook, Dec. 11, 1882

OUR MOTHER

M. W.

THERE's a calm and pallid face,
  Sweet with smiles, but worn with care;
Gentlest love, serenest grace
  Set their tender radiance there.

None have known it, none shall know
  But to love its peaceful calm,
Pure as flakes of driven snow,
  Heartsome as a pictured psalm.

There's a form by suffering bent,
  And a voice once soft and low,
With whose cadences were blent
  Memories of the long ago.

There's a crown of snow-flecked hair,
  Once as black as raven wings,
There's a life whose toils are prayer,
  And its thoughts thank-offerings.

Blow, sweet blossoms! Warble, birds!
  Soft spring breezes, rise and bring
Answer to our hopeful words,
On her pale cheek blossoming!

Health, thou child of earth and sky,
  By the Father's tender grace!
Speak once more from her soft eye,
  Light again her pallid face!

Unto her be length of days,
Each terrestrial joy be given,
And, in some fair world of praise,
All the endless bliss of heaven.

A CHRISTMAS THOUGHT

Give gracious gifts to your children,
For this is the Christmas time!
Love is far better than money,
Example is better than rhyme,
And a joyous heart and a truthful tongue
Are forever fair and forever young.

A mind that is eager and earnest,
A thought that is tender and true,
Is a dowry excelling your riches,
To cherish this whole life through;
And the maid, when she marries, will do the best,
Who wins a brave heart in a manly breast.

Not he who has lands and houses
That were won by the niggard's zeal,
Has the best of his toiling fellows
In the world's great commonweal;
But an open mind and a liberal hand
Belong to him who shall most command.

An eye for the joy of nature,
An ear for the voice of song;
A will to answer a brother's need,
To suffer and still be strong;
Give these to man and you make him great,
To contend with wrong and to vanquish fate.

Then lead, with your happy giving,
Your words, your walk, your praise,
The glad, rejoicing children
In wisdom's golden ways,
For morning's sun and evening's shade
Bless him who blesses boy or maid.

And because the time is Christmas,
When love is a holy fire;
And because the hearts of children
Are full of youth's desire,
Let your gifts be gracious,—your chidings few,
That the souls of the children may cleave to you.

BEYOND THE AFTERNOON

To HIM who toileth in the afternoon
How grateful are the shadows pointing east,
The cool, soft shadows that shall darken soon,—
For rest is most when light and warmth are least.
Refreshing dews condense on leaf and vine,
And gather in the blossom's honeyed cell;
The setting sun along th' horizon's line
Paints the wide wonder of a day's farewell.

Bowed at his toil the old man feels the kiss
Of evening's zephyr on his wind-browned face,
Bearing a promise of the rest that is
Beyond his vision, where life's varied ways
Cross the dim shadow line and come no more
Within the range of any mortal eye;
But dusk, that hides the sunset's golden door
Unveils the stars and shows the moon on high.

The wings of night birds fan the restful air,
  The insect choirs are musically glad;
Come from thy want of leisure, bent with care,
  Poor drudging worm, and be no longer sad!
The day was long, but morning's gladness soon
  Became a memory, and the fiery heat
Flamed all about thee in the blazing noon,—
  Toil in the fields and turmoil in the street;

Toil for thy hands and conflict for thy thought,
  With hopes deferred and aspirations dead,
For thou hast sown for other reapers, wrought
  That others might enjoy, and thou hast shed
Thy sweat and blood and tears for those who shine
  In jewels and fine raiment, gath'ring gain
And bleaching their soft hands at cost of thine,
  So hard and seamed with unrequited pain.

They sport their riches, sing their idle songs,
  And dance like moths about th' unhallowed fires
That they are feeding with thy crying wrongs,
  Nor note the gloom in which thy life expires;
No matter now! the stars are in the sky,
  The day's last purple fades with night's increase;
Lift up thy soul in thanks, for God is nigh,
  And in His presence there is joy and peace!

Soon the globed dew shall settle on thy cheek,
  And spiders spin their webs across thy breast,
And night hawks call to thee, who will not speak,
  So deep, so perfect then shall be thy rest;
And men shall note the still, unmeasured calm,
  The silent wonder in thy pallid face,

As if in heaven thy ears had caught the psalm
From some divinest altitude of grace;

Then go and write their little verdict, "Dead
By dispensation of Almighty God,"
And give a pauper's pillow to thy head
In some rude box, hid swiftly 'neath the sod.
So let them spurn thee! Kings shall share thy rest;
The grass shall bloom above thy slumber soon;
Somewhere, in God's own time, thy worth confessed,
Thou shalt find heaven beyond the afternoon.

THE FALLEN STUDENT

I

The sun arose, the morn was grand,
He walked beside the blooming sedge;
He heard the wild birds in the hedge,
And saw the glory of the land.

II

He found a valley full of song,
Where every song bore this refrain,
Repeated o'er and o'er again:
"Here rest is sweet and pleasure long."

III

The vale was very fair to see;
All sounds that fell upon the ear
Were melody itself to hear,
And yet the wonder seemed to be,

IV

To the poor student, pale and worn,
That all its fields were void of grain,
That each joy's aftermath was pain,
And every flower concealed a thorn.

V

Its waters to the thirsty tongue
Were nectar first, but quickly gall,
While from each tree and tower and wall
Festoons of poison ivy hung.

VI

Here dancing sirens holding high
Rare goblets brimmed with rosy wine,
Sang praise to Bacchus and the vine,
To bestial pleasures, thoughts that fly

VII

In reeking atmospheres that move
Where dull brute instincts scarce descend,
Where all ambitions meanly end—
Where hell is heaven and lust is love:

VIII

And while as in a waking swoon
He viewed the valley falsely fair,
He felt a wave of dull despair
Clutch at his spirit, while a rune

IX

Of lethean melody arose:
"Leave, student, leave thy rugged path,
Forsake the mountain's icy wrath,
For this broad vale of sweet repose.

X

"Thereon thy feet are torn with thorns,
Thy hands with constant toils are sore,
While fame and knowledge flit before
And cheat thee of the countless morns

XI

"And evenings riotous with delights,
And days of ease and months of joy,
That youth and beauty here employ,
To worship pleasure in her flights.

XII

"Then here, no more our bliss despise,
Youth comes but once; you cannot wait;
When age's palsy falls, 'tis late,
Alas! too late, for pleasure flies

XIII

"From sunken cheek and faded hair:
Then leave ambition, leave the quest
For knowledge, that disturbs thy breast!
Fame's phantom temple in the air

XIV

"Above yon mountain's rugged brow,
Thy limbs, to reach are all too frail;
No power hast thou its walls to scale—
Come then, be happy here, and now!"

XV

The song there ended, but about
His temples blew a languid breeze
From poppied caves and lotus trees
And steeped his soul in dreamy doubt,

XVI

Till knowledge seemed an idle thing,
And heaven a thought too far away
To trust or cherish, and the sway
Of truth a dream that poets sing.

XVII

The breeze blew fresher and desire
Came on its wings and sought his heart,
Which passion, with its poisoned dart,
Touched deep and set his blood on fire.

XVIII

"Farewell!" he cried, "a long farewell
To mathematics dull and cold,
To poesy, with harp of gold,
To Cæsar's wars and Dante's hell;

XIX

To science with her weary toil,
To language and its endless chaff,
To Plutarch's wisdom, Æsop's laugh,
To Bacon's studies, Johnson's moil.

XX

"Henceforth I count the dream of fame
A vain illusion, vast and far
Beyond me as the radiant star
That crowns the morning with its flame.

XXI

"Oh! strong for pleasure, weak for pain,
The pinions of my soul have grown,
I shall reap joys I have not sown,
Ambition's burial is my gain."

XXII

Thus sank the student, thus, in sooth,
Have thousands fallen, to rise no more,
Nor earth nor heaven shall e'er restore
The murdered hopes of their lost youth.

XXIII

When years were ended, in a land
Of rock and desert, thirst and heat,
An aged man with bleeding feet
Walked lonely o'er the scorching sand.

XXIV

Some remnants of an ancient fire
Burned dimly in his wandering eye,
His voice was but a treble cry,
And he seemed ready to expire,

XXV

Save that regret—a fury grown—
Lashed all his failing powers to life,
And stirred him with a ceaseless strife,
And mocked him with the siren's tone.

XXVI

"Ah! me," he cried, "the road is long,
And blank and sad and full of pain,
I cannot find my way again—
I listened to the siren's song!

XXVII

"God made me for the heights sublime;
I sought the vale, became a thrall;
Did angels weep above my fall?
I know not. Oh! my crime! my crime.

XXVIII

"Youth sought indulgence, idly sweet,
Sowed not to spirit but to flesh;
Fell in the tempter's gilded mesh,
And with the mire beclogged his feet.

XXIX

"I dream of hope, but dare not call
Upon my God, so long, so long,
I listened to the siren's song,
I fell and knew not I did fall.

XXX

"Oh! I have reapt as I did sow!
Yon mountain's brow were Eden to me,
My dear old books 'twere bliss to see,
The schoolboy's wisdom heaven to know.

XXXI

"Ah! weary heart, the road so long
Will soon be traveled, I shall die;
Will heaven attend my latest cry?
'I listened to the siren's song!'"

JOE'S VISIT

HER STORY

How many friends have died since we
Were young, and full of hope and joy!
Grave matrons, whom we loved to see,
Strong man, fair maiden, laughing boy;
A sister here, and there a friend,

Till all things into sorrow blend;
  And here, in this sad neighborhood,
  We scarcely dream of earthly good;
Our joyful times are times of prayer,
When we ascend the heavenly stair
  With feet that used to idly stray
  Where youth and pleasure led the way—
Ah! youth and pleasure! did we know
Such worldly raptures long ago?

I did not think that, evermore,
  The memories of my youth would rise,
Except as follies to deplore,
  Sweet pictures that deceive our eyes:
And so I nursed my fifty years,
Sometimes in peace, sometimes in tears;
  And tried the preacher's words to mind,
  And all my joy in Christ to find;
To comfort James, and do my best
To merit everlasting rest;
  Till Joe came driving from the town,
  And brought his wife and daughters down
To spend the day and talk, when oh!
He brought me back the long ago.

There is such music in his voice;
  Such happy thoughts his words express;
I could not other than rejoice
  In his old ways of pleasantness,
Till backward flew the circling years,
Forgotten were our cares and tears;
  My heart beat faster, and my blood
  Ran on, a warmer, swifter flood;
No more I thought of deep distress,
Endured for primal wickedness,
  Nor struggled with the doubt and thrall
  Of Eve's deep sin and Adam's fall;

But all my soul did overflow
With blessed joys of long ago.

And James, who seldom smiles, as thou
Remembrest, doubtless, laughed and said
That "really—he knew not how–
But Joe could surely raise the dead
With that old heartsome way of his,
So robust in its manlinesss,
And yet so tender, sweet and true,
So tinged with life's exultant hue."
And when his wife and girls chimed in—
Perhaps it may have been a sin—
Our hearts grew light, our souls grew young
And all sweet measures said or sung,
Fell on my senses, soft and low,
Just as they did so long ago.

So long ago, when Joe and I
Were nearer by a shade than friends,
When softly beamed the morning sky,
And life seemed made for blissful ends;
Again we chatted down the path,
With jest and song, and merry laugh;
We mingled in the sport and play
That ends the rustic holiday;
We won our airy conquests o'er,
Recounted all the frugal store
Of joys our humble youth had given,
And spoke of some dear friends in heaven,
And Joe's glad voice, it thrilled me so,
I smelled the pinks of long ago.

And Joe, he seems so young and fair,
Is so compassionate and kind,
And wishes every one to share
The largess of his own free mind—

So bound with every suffering soul,
So glad to make the wounded whole—
  That fasts, renunciations, prayers,
  He scarcely counts among his cares;
But smiles and says, "Perhaps your creed
Is all you claim; but kindly deed,
  And loving heart and open hand,
  Control me with a sure command,
That o'er my life began to grow
When we were children long ago."

And though I pity his poor doubt,
  Or fancy so, I watch his face,
And try to make the secret out
  Of all its manly strength and grace,
And how, beneath his fifty years,
He still a boy at heart appears.
  He has known sorrows, such as break
  The wills of braver men, and make
Life's pathway blossomless and bare,
Or lit by passion's baleful glare;
  Or one that leads to some sad cell
  Where earth-denying hermits dwell;
But Joe, each year, is more like Joe,
The glad heart of the long ago.

I cannot analyze his thought,
  Nor answer why his presence brings
My petty cares and griefs to naught,
  And makes me think of happy things;
Nor why—O, friend! am I to blame?—
His dark eyes thrill my mental frame,
  Till I, who love my James so well,
  Go back along the past, and dwell
On each glad hour with Joe, and guess
How great had been my happiness
  If "sound belief" and fruitful land

Had not stept in and claimed my hand,
And I had answered "yes" to Joe,
That summer evening long ago.

I cannot pause to sorrow now,
Nor think of him who wooed and won
A fickle heart with fickler vow,
Then left me as the vagrant sun
Leaves, in the shadow, lowland flower,
To woo the rose in lady's bower;
Nor how Joe, smiling when we met,
A smile subdued by some regret,
Seemed ever more life's best estate,
Blown from me by a cruel fate,
Till once—such griefs must have an end—
I loved and married Joe's best friend:
But in this country place, you know,
We've missed Joe's voice since long ago.

Till now he comes, the flower of spring
And fruit of summer all in one,
And finds me old, a withered thing,
A stalk long blanched by storm and sun;
With much self-introspection worn,
Taught that 'tis woman's lot to mourn
Eve's primal sin, and work and wait
In sadness, for the heavenly gate,
On golden hinges swinging wide,
To give her room to creep inside
Behind the crowds of saints, and raise,
Half guiltily, her song of praise.
He comes!—this old broad-shouldered Joe—
And warms me with the long ago.

He laughs, and sings an idle song,
And jests—such jests would try me so
From any of the common throng;—
But, somehow, seem all right from Joe—

He says God meant us to be glad,
And, blessing others, to be blest;
  And that no life is wholly bad,
  Howe'er with sin and shame oppressed,
And adds: "A woman* wrote those words
Whose songs were sweeter than the birds,
A suffering woman, who, from pain,
  Reaped precious fruits of heavenly gain."
O, this rare heretic, this Joe,
My heart he's filled with long ago!

Of course it's wrong in me to feel
  Delighted with such golden chaff;
Yet, all forgetful of the zeal
  That chides a woman's happy laugh,
As some poor boy with palsied limb,
Beholds his comrades leap or swim,
  And feels their thrills of joy, so I
  Perceive some influence from the sky
Steal to my senses and reveal,
More than his words, of heavenly weal,
  Till the sweet thought I half believe
  That such fair views will not deceive:
But what were views when there was Joe,
And round us all the long ago?

THE POET'S ART—A FRAGMENT

Despise not the art
Of the poet, the master,
Whose fingers fall lightly
On keys far resounding
The thrill of his touches,
Till heart unto heart
Through the ages beats faster,

*Alice Cary.

As man unto man looks
With kindlier emotions,
And in lives, as in books,
Reads the wonderful story,—
The oneness of Godhood,
The oneness of forces,
The oneness of manhood,
The purpose, the glory,
Of beautiful thinking;
The honor of labor,
The peril of license,
Of ease and indulgence,
And thought to thought linking,
Leads up to the summit
Where joys paradisal
Bloom sweet on the stems
Of life's thorniest sorrows.

Despise not the art
Of the poet, the lover,
Who breathes to the lute
The most delicate measures,
That kindle the heart
Till the winged god, the rover,
Floats by on the wings
Of the song he is singing,
And prudence grows mute
While th' immortal boy's fingers
Fling swift from the strung bow
The sweet, stinging arrows,
Whose wounds never heal
While this mortal life lingers.

Despise not the art
Of the poet, the warrior,
Whose measures like drum-rolls
Call men from their mountains,

Fields, hamlets and meadows,
From the dearest to part;
And from all the sure fountains
Of pride in their strong souls,
Bids patriot emotions
Arise and o'erwhelm them,
And carry them boldly
To battle and slaughter,
Where blood flows like water;
Espousing the merits
And dying for causes
Whose justice they know not.

Despise not the art
Of the poet, the singer,
The follower of Pan
By the rivers melodious,
Where sweet naiads linger,
And the muses divine,—
Coming down from their mountains
To bathe in the music
And float in the waters,
The song-breathing waters—
That flow ever on
From Parnassian fountains,—
Are charmed till they woo
And inspire the sweet singer
With swift inspiration
And rare divination
Of heavenly things;
Till his song outward rushes
In musical gushes,
Such as glorious Apollo,
And all of the old gods,
The strong, the judicious,
Had delighted to hear:
And his singing propitious,

Forever shall follow
The sons and the daughters
Of men, as if given
To sound in their souls,
As the world onward rolls,
Through the storm and affright
Of the dark Stygian night
The glad music of heaven.

REPETITION

Tell me, O warbler! why the dying day
Paints, as he languishes, those amber seas
That round the capes of Scarlet Islands play,
Where float unnumbered golden argosies,
Wrought into life, upon the canvas mist,
From every tint of moth and bird and shell
And every bloom the lover sun has kissed?
Why wreathe such gladness round his last farewell?

Tell me, O poet! singing as the night
Falls on thy silver locks with kindly shade,
What angel hopes thy lofty muse incite,
What lovely images thy peace invade,
Till thou art wearing, like the dying day,
A mist of joy to gladden that sweet sky
Whereon thy mortal lustres fade away
And melt into the bliss that cannot die?

"A day lives not for its brief span alone,
But for all futures shines the fruitful sun
With warmth that touches even the dim unknown,"
The minstrel bird made answer "Life shall run,"

The poet murmured, "singing ever more;
And what are we, that, mourning fate or fame,
We should go trembling to the peaceful shore,
Low-browed and groaning with regretful shame?"

The poet's audience ever shall increase,
And some may sing, and some may only hear
The tripping numbers other hands release:
Yet backward still through many a golden year
The white-haired bard goes chanting, hour by hour,
To some sweet clientage beneath the grass,
And souls he knows not of perceive his power,
Hold him secure, and will not let him pass.

Thus through the ages leaf and flower repeat
The tender radiance of a long-lost day,
And earth and sea and sky are more complete
And perfect, for each broken, faded ray;
And still some echo from the poet's strain
Falls, faint and far, upon the souls of men,
Or woos sad hearts a moment from their pain,
Though all forgot the hand that held the pen.

WHEN THE SWALLOWS ARE FLYING AWAY

The summer is dying, the days shorter growing,
The stars getting brighter each clear, length'ning night,
While the harvester, Time, hurries on with his mowing,
And seems in his labor of death to delight.

But now as the leaves, ripening purple and golden,
Like beautiful banners enrich all the day,
We sit dreaming dreams, conning memories olden,
And watching the swallows go flying away—
The glad summer swallows all flying away.

No more to the voice of ambition or passion
The spirit gives audience, but listens alone
To musical idyls of love and compassion,
That bear us a blessing on every sweet tone.
A sadness subdued softens every emotion,
And tempers the fancy's most delicate play,
And calms in the heart every rising commotion,
While the hours with the swallows go flying away—
With the glad summer swallows are flying away.

The rosy-cheeked children come laughing and singing
From rude, happy homes of our earlier days;
No shadows of tombs on their fairy brows bringing,
No soiled, bleeding feet from the world's thorny ways;
We welcome them, kiss them and give them our blessing—
The lips that are dust, and the feet long astray,
And thrill to their love as they pass, lightly pressing
Our hands in their own, and go flying away—
With the beautiful swallows go flying away.

We have watched, you and I, in the sweet autumn weather
Full many a rich sunset fade out in the west,
And still, as we've walked in the twilight together,

Has Hope wandered near us, our welcomest
guest,
Till now on this dreamiest eve we behold her
Again painting heaven and love on the day
As it fadeth forever, and swiftly enfold her
All warm to our hearts, that she fly not away—
That our hope with the swallows shall fly not
away.

ACROSS THE SNOW

Across the snow and over the sand,
Where summer lingers with song and bloom,
The festooned oaks of Florida stand
Enshrouded in odorous gloom;
Over the mountains, across the snow,
The blue sky smileth and bendeth low.

Across the snow and over the sea,
Italy laughs, like a child at play;
And her rivers that sing incessantly
Are wooing the soul away!
Over the sea and across the snow
They are calling me, but I cannot go.

Across the snow and over the tears,
The wonder-world of our childhood lies,
And voices echo across the years
With whispered questions and low replies,
Over the graves and across the snow,
The children are calling who loved me so.

Across the snow and beyond the doubt,
There lieth a land so sweet and fair

That none who enter will turn about
To bring us tidings of loved ones there;
Over the doubt and across the snow
The dear ones beckon and I shall go.

WINSOME JENNIE

Jennie's head was proud and queenly
With the curling gold it wore,
Wavy as the brooklet's laughter,
And her face was rippled o'er
With alternate smiles and blushes,
In the days that are no more:
In the well-remembered mornings
Of the days that are no more.

We shall meet no more together
When the stars are in the sky;
We shall rake no more the meadows
When the morning sun is high;
Happy Jennie, darling Jennie,
With the lustre in her eye,
Jennie singing with the thrushes
In the merry days gone by.

Oh! the world was fair and gracious
When our youthful hearts were bold;
Still the sunshine falls as sweetly,
But these formal folk are cold;
Not the earnest, hearty people
Of the sainted days of old;
Not the strong, unselfish people
Of the ruder days of old.

Still the river wanders singing,
And the children from the school

Bare their dimpled feet, as we did,
Wading in the self-same pool;
But the master, the beloved
Monarch of the gentle rule,
Lies upon the hillside sleeping,
Calmly, as he once did rule.

Oh! as Fancy's cunning fingers
Touch the singing strings of gold,
And her harp repeats the measures
Of the sunny days of old,
Jennie's self is in the music,
Never formal, proud nor cold,
Gentle Jennie, winsome Jennie,
Jennie with the heart of old.

In the orchards, where the russets
Hold within their golden rinds
Nectar fit for gods of Hellas,
Voices low are on the winds;
On the haunted winds of evening,
Prattle, such as youthful minds
Gather into speech, the flutter
Of the wings of growing minds.

And these murmurs, falling faintly
On the ear, like distant calls
Of the mellow, merry bugle,
Or the laugh of waterfalls,
Echo from that happy castle,
With th' Apollo-pictured walls,
From the fortress of our childhood,
With its angel-guarded walls.

Voices long unused to singing
Any song of doubt or woe,
Voices trained for heavenly uses
By the seraphs long ago,

Mingle in the flowing measures,
Softly glad and sweetly low;
But there's none exceedeth Jennie's—
Jennie's voice so sweet and low.

Once again her slender fingers
Lie within my nut-stained hand,
And we wander where the Autumn
Pours her splendor on the land,
Wondering over Nature's problems
That we cannot understand,
Guessing much at many matters
That we do not understand.

Why the old leaves fade and perish
Only that the new may grow,
Why the lovely flowers must wither
And give place to mud and snow,
Why do children die, and whither
Do the pretty children go?
Now, as then, but echo answers,
Where do pretty children go?

Never thought of love came to us
As we wandered side by side;
When we parted, heavy-hearted,
Sorrow flowing like a tide,
Still no stream of mortal passion
Swept our souls, unsatisfied,
Into dreams of one sweet future
Where they should be satisfied.

Yet in many a rural picture
Do my willing eyes behold
Laughing Jennie, winsome Jennie,
With her tresses like spun gold;
She, the sunniest smile of morning,
In the budding days of old,

Jennie singing with the thrushes
In the merry morns of old.

* * * * *

Jennie's hair is flecked with silver,
And her girls are reigning now;
Jennie's throat is clasped with diamonds,
There are wrinkles on her brow.
Does she dream, in silks and satins,
Of the boy behind the plow,
Of the barefoot boy she cherished
When he toiled behind the plow?

It was well for us we parted
When the morn was on the shore;
It is well that we shall wander
In that morning land no more!
Ours is but the same old story,
Still repeated o'er and o'er,
Youth with forward gaze, and age that
Sighs for days that are no more.

VOICES OF SONG

The odor songs that blossoms sing
In their delight of summer days,
No voice, no reed, no sounding string,
No ecstasy of tremulous keys,
Can match their silent melodies,
Their excellence of praise.

The songs of birds that flow and fall
With all the sunny tides of spring,
And to the eager spirit call,
In measures softly glad and sweet,

To rise and pay the tribute meet
To Nature's gracious King,—

Are they not minstrelsies of praise
With no imperfectness to mar,
No faulty notes, no feeble lays,
But fraught with all the joyful tune
That thrills the soul of rapturous June,
Where peace and plenty are?

The songs of children, lisping songs,
That tell of innocence and joy,—
What nameless melody prolongs
The influence of each tiny note
That warbles from the swelling throat
Of timorous girl or boy?

The old man, standing by his tomb,
Heeds not the sad refrain of death,
For yonder, where the roses bloom,
He hears the children's song arise,
And all the day before him lies,
Fresh in the morning's breath.

The songs of flowers and brooks and birds,
The melodies that children make,
And those delicious, deathless words
That love to music weds alway—
Fond echoes growing day by day—
No grief their spell can break.

Where faith exalts and hope inspires
The throbbing notes that outward pour
Till every trembling soul aspires,
And on the song's melodious wings
The yearning spirit upward springs
To worship and adore,

There is a taste of Heaven below,
An influence linking soul to soul,
A sweeter music than we know
In our poor voices, an excess
Of inward joy and happiness
To melodize the whole.

O, Song! thou spirit, heavenly, fair,
As are the angel choirs that move
To thy delightful measures, where
No sin can enter, make us thine
And crown us with thy joy divine,
And fill us with thy love!

And Thou who art of all the source,—
All good, all joy, all seeming ill,
All life or death, attraction, force,—
Let every note our souls upraise
Be hallowed sweetly to Thy praise
And tempered to thy will!

THE BELLS

I HEAR the ringing of the bells, the bells,
Announcing, "Christ has come;"
I hear the cannon in the street,
And the rolling of the drum,
And the marching tread of a thousand feet,
And I ask if Christ has come.

I hear the ringing of the bells, the bells,
Proclaiming, "Christ is here;"
And I see the children of want and sin,
Hovering far or near,
In the country's quiet, the city's din,
And I wonder if Christ is here.

I hear the ringing of the bells, the bells,
Echoing, "Christ is King;"
And I see in a score of Christian lands
Oppression's brooding wing,
And murderous hearts and bloody hands,
And I wonder if Christ is King.

I hear the ringing of the bells, the bells,
Resounding, "Christ is known;"
And I see the treachery, know the hate
And the bitter passions, grown
Alike in the hearts of humble or great,
And I wonder if Christ is known.

I hear the ringing of the bells, the bells,
Proclaiming, "Christ is here;"
And I hear a baby's prattling glee,
And I bid farewell to fear,
For wherever a sinless child may be,
The sweet Christ dwelleth near.

CORABELL

Fair comrades, do not chide me
For moods that ill betide me;
A shadow walks beside me,
Clothed in a mist of woe;
A wraith, and a real presence,
A vapor, a sorrow's essence;
It chills and haunts me so
That, for all your merry-making,
My heart is full to breaking
With a grief you can not know.

Hark, how the winds are crying,
And the leafless branches sighing,

Where Corabell is lying
Under the ice and snow!
Glad Corabell whose bosom
Thrilled to bird and blossom
Warmed to the rose's glow;
Whose true heart stilled its beating
When love and hope were meeting
In tryst there long ago.

The bees are gone from the clover,
The butterfly, the rover,
That flew like a fickle lover
From honeyed bloom to bloom,
Is dead in the grass; the cricket
No more awakes the thicket
At the fall of evening's gloom;
And Corabell is sleeping,
While her mother sits a-weeping
In the dear, old-fashioned room.

What now is my dream of glory,
When grass is growing o'er thee,
And my soul has gone before me
To share thy silent rest?
The drum has a throb of sadness,
The bugle's mellow gladness,
That falls on a heart oppressed,
Sings, "Corabell, sweet Cora,
The winsome winds deplore thee,
Thou fairest, purest, best!"

The poet's rhymed emotion
Sobs like the wailing ocean,
When thrilled with love's devotion
For one who dies at morn;
In the morning warm and tender,
When the sun's advancing splendor

Is on the blooming corn;
In the morning's holy gladness,
When death is a triple sadness,
And the sweetest things are born.

"Is Corabell a vision"
You ask "of a dream elysian?
And is the poet's mission
To picture its fading ray?
To faintly echo over
The words of a yearning lover
Who cannot go nor stay,
The cry of a trust immortal
That waits at the future's portal
Till the stone be rolled away,
And the Christ of hope arisen,
And the dead steps from her prison
In the warmth of an endless day?"

Know, then, the world is sighing
For Corabell's low lying,
And love and faith are flying
Across the bars of night.
Away in the dim hereafter
We listen for girlish laughter,
When the morn shall break in sight:
But the winds to-night are weeping
Where Corabell is sleeping
And the snow is cold and white.

A MIST OF WHITE LACES

A MIST of white laces,
An odor of bloom,—
And the fairest of faces
Is lost in the gloom.

A mist of white laces,
  A beautiful face;
Henceforth every place is
  Divine with their grace.

A tinkle of laughter,
  A silvery note,
Which echo speaks after
  With heart in her throat.

A tinkle of laughter,
  A quaver of song,
That music thereafter
  Shall ever prolong.

A kiss thrown by fingers
  As sweet as the dawn,
And its warmth ever lingers
  Till life is withdrawn.

A kiss thrown by fingers
  From lips of red rose,
And the heart where it lingers
  Has lost its repose.

O, mist of white laces!
  O, kisses and song!
I know your sweet place is
  Where angels belong.

And laces and kisses
  And songs that inspire
In a world such as this is,
  Wake heavens of desire.

BARD AND BLOSSOM

Ha! my laughing violet,
In your tiny calyx set,
With your winsome eye of blue
Looking all my spirit through,
While you seem to nod and say,
"Old Spring poet, go your way!"

Tell me, roguish little sweet,
Isn't there some small deceit,
Child-like, make-believe pretense
In that pouting innocence
Of indifference that you show,
When these rhymers praise you so?

PRETTY MARY, O!

No more with tears I count the years
  When sorrow wooed me long ago;
Though hearts must bleed when they have need,
  And friends may wound you worse than foe;
Smiles come at last, when grief goes past;
  But oh! our thoughts did vary so
When I sat back, with head bowed down,
And you stood up before the town
  A-marrying pretty Mary, O!

O, fairest maid! through sun and shade
  And storm and darkness brooding so,
She was my star that smiled afar,
  The only lamp I cared to know!
You soared on high and from the sky

My pretty star bore swiftly, Joe;
And then to say "God bless you both!"
It tore me like a cruel oath,
When you had wed my Mary, O!

Lo, time has wings that bring sweet things
To hide the wounds that rend us so:
A winsome touch that thrills me much
Is now upon my shoulder, Joe,
And gentle eyes whose light I prize
More than all dreams I used to know,
Look into mine, and we renew
And send the thankful love of two
To Joe and pretty Mary, O!

A SONG

The air is rich with summer bloom,
But Summer's friends are flying,
The rose is losing its perfume,
The dusk comes down on wings of gloom,
And the Summer day is dying.

Sit down, O friend! and live once more
With me the past time over,
The Summers that we knew before
Experience taught me to deplore,
Or thou became a rover.

Fair youth and innocence go by
Locked hand in hand together,
And, as they pass, let's you and I
Recall our youth, join hands and cry,
"God bless this Summer weather!"

TWO LITTLE GIRLS

I

Two little faces, cheerful and bright,
Smile at the window, just where the light
Comes from the full moon, comes from the stars,
To fall o'er their tresses in silvery bars.

II

Two little voices, eager to greet
Papa, dear papa, who comes down the street;
With flutters of laughter, and kisses like rain,
Two sweet little girls meet their papa again;
Searching his pockets for candies and things,
Teasing for pennies, worrying for strings,
Asking for stories, crying for toys,
The two little girls are his cares and his joys.

III

Four little brown hands, chubby and slight,
Hold on to mamma from morning till night,
Pull at her apron, pull at her hair,
Lay in her own hand, that once was so fair.

IV

Two little bodies for mamma to dress,
To worry and toil for, to love and caress,
To watch in the night time, in sorrow and pain,
No matter how weary her limbs and her brain.

V

Two little cherubs that, mamma declares,
Are angels descended on love's shining stairs,
To bless her and crown her with life's greenest
bays,
Are the bliss of their mother, the joy of her days.

THE SONG OF VIVIENNE

THERE is Winter on the mere,
Frozen streams are in the glen,
But 'tis Summer in the heart
Of the best of noble men,
As he sings his lightsome rune,
"Happy, happy Vivienne!"
As he chants his vernal rhyme,
"Happy be, my Vivienne!"

Bear away the crimson leaves,
Rude Euroclydon, and blow
Strength to many a heart that grieves
In the tainted air of woe!
He is strong to buffet thee;
Storm and turmoil suit him best;
He, the pride of noble men,
Bears a brave heart in his breast.

Pour your wealth of white snows down,
Leaden clouds that shroud the day!
Dreary country, cheerless town,
Children prisoned from their play,—
What are they to such as he,
Bold to face the Winter grim?
What are they to happy me,—
Happy, being loved by him?

Shake the timid soul with fear,
Howling through the naked grove,
Winds of Winter! Lo, I hear
In your mad tones notes of love,

Strong and passionate and brave,
As my hero sings to me,
"I will love thee in my grave,
Living I will worship thee."

LONG AGO

Long ago! where the ranks of maple trees
Flung their red crowns on the breeze,
And the orchis faded slow
To the airs of long ago,
Long ago,
Our sweet Adonais lay dead,
With a glory round his head;
Heart by Cupid's arrow smitten,
Lowly name in water written;
Then our souls were filled with woe,
As we laid his form alow,
In that saddest long ago,
Long ago.

Long ago! when the June with billowy mirth
Poured her blossoms on the earth,
And life's rhythmic stream did flow
Bankful, shouting, long ago,
Long ago,
Sweet Urania, gently wise,
Softly came from Paradise,
Opened her blue eyes so tender
On the ardent morning's splendor;
And we wept with joy to know
That her smiles were beaming so,
In those days of long ago,
Long ago.

Long ago, when the milder vernal airs
Wooed the song-birds back in pairs,
And the sap began to flow
In the trees of long ago,
Long ago,
Abelard and Heloise
Braved a hundred staring eyes,
Joined their hands in true love token,
And the solemn words were spoken,
And the good man, soft and low,
Prayed God blessings to bestow
On their twin hearts, long ago,
Long ago.

Long ago, when the world was white with frost,
And the winds, like spirits lost,
Wailed and wandered to and fro,
Shrieking, in the long ago,
Long ago,
Then our Aristides old
Bowed his forehead white and cold,
Dropped his staff, and murmured slowly
Broken prayers unto the Holy,
And our spirits felt the blow
Death was dealing,—even so
Did we sorrow long ago,
Long ago.

Long ago, as the seasons hurried by,
Some were born to smile and die;
All were given to joy and woe,
Alternating long ago,
Long ago:
Love's requital still denied,
Youthful poets pined and died;
But the babe's life opening sweetly,
And the marriage made discreetly,

Thrilled with joy life's onward flow;
Age and wisdom, lying low,
Often warned us long ago,
Long ago.

Long ago! Who shall say when first that word
From the lips of man was heard?
When the morning stars aglow
Sang their hymn so long ago,
Long ago,
In their happy chorus cast,
Were there not dreams of the past?
Will not blessed angels winging
Through the fields of heaven, singing,
Chant forever, soft and low,
As the ages onward flow,
Of the sad, sweet long ago,
Long ago?

POOR MADELINE'S SONG

I sit and I sing,
With the dark cricket king,
As the long summer day goeth down.
When the eve stars peep out,
Then I laugh and I shout,
For my lover will come from the town.
His hair is as black
As the wood-beetle's back,
And his eyes are as dark as the dell,
When the dank, moonless midnight is riding on high.
As we meet, his full face, like the soft morning sky,
Lighteth up, for he loveth me well.

O lover of mine!
All my being is thine,
Yet I wring my thin hands in a dream:
A dream of all woe,
Wherein dead warriors go
Sinking down in a dark, stagnant stream,
Whose inky waves creep
Where the pines ever keep
Their watch o'er the bones of the dead,
That a spirit, who rode on the lava's red waves
With noises of earthquakes and yawning of graves,
Slew once in that valley of dread.

Go, dream, from my brain!
You would craze me again:
And my lover did not go to war!
Now rises and swells
The sweet chime of the bells
And smiles my betrothal-eve's star.
All in white I will ride
By my dark hero's side,
And the envious maidens shall sigh:
As we blithely step in at the good parson's door,
And I lean on his arm as we walk up the floor,
Oh, who'll be so happy as I?

Late! late! is it late?
Do I query with fate?
Why falls not that kingliest tread?
O ho! so you say
That my hair has turned gray,
That my hero, my lover 's long dead:
Go back with your lie!

I will look to the sky
And believe the sweet angels instead.
Far off, mid the stars, sounds a soft, golden bell,
And I know that the seraphs are ringing it well:
In the morning we twain shall be wed.

HYMN TO NIGHT

I

O NIGHT, upon thy myriad streaming wings
Of throbbing darkness, when the stars were mute
And angel choirs and hosts of heavenly things
Upon the verge of time stood awed, irresolute,
My soul has met thee there, alone, forlorn,
Has met thee there and dared to dream of morn,
To dream of morning and thank God that I a soul was born.

II

O, passing wonderful and full of love
And strength and glory and the boundless thought
That fills and thrills all things below,—above,
With life and motion, I have something caught,
Faintly, indeed, yet hints of thy delight
When thou art in thy royal robes bedight
And Suns and Systems are the jewels in thy crown, O Night!

III

With drowsy insect music manifold,
The gurgling flow of waters, tinkling bells
Of herds, that crop the herbage on the wold,
And the late lover's song that feebly swells

And dies upon the languid summer air,
Oft has Night met me and with kindly care
Folded her fond, indulgent wings about me
there.

IV

O, love the night! for she is beautiful,
And majesty himself sits throned with her:
The well-beloved, the strong, the dutiful,
Venus and Odin, Ceres, Jupiter,
And all the powers of matter, force and mind,
Are in the service of the night resigned,—
The great-souled night that to our little faults is
blind.

"LOVE ME LITTLE, LOVE ME LONG"

"Love me little, love me long!"
'Tis the burden of my song;
Ardor ever seems to be
Born of love's inconstancy.
Those who love too much forget;
Those who trust too much regret;
Moderation breeds no wrong:
"Love me little, love me long!"
Love me long!

"Love me little, love me long!"
From the hotly breathing throng,
Whose affections burn as fire
Till love dieth with desire,
Lead me gently far away
In cool meadow paths to stray,
Where the robin lifts his song:
"Love me little, love me long!"
Love me long!

"Love me little, love me long!"
Listen! 'tis no idle song;
He who loves his bride too well,
Wearies oft and breaks the spell,
Or, in sorrow and distress,
Loves his children's mother less,
Gentle love is pure and strong:
"Love me little, love me long!"
Love me long!

"Love me little, love me long!"
You I chose from all the throng
Of the noble and the brave,
Walk beside me to the grave!
Do not greedily devour
All our love in one sweet hour!
As I sing it in my song:
"Love me little, love me long!"
Love me long!

EVENING SONG OF THE DISSATISFIED SOUL

There is a light along the west,
And red mists floating there.
There is a light along the west;
But the heart is sad in my weary breast,
And heavy with doubt and care.

A bird is singing his evening song,
And the swallows are flying away.
A robin is singing his evening song;
But the way is dark, and the road is long,
And I can not go nor stay.

The blossom is folding a drop of dew
To rest on its fragrant heart.
The blossom is folding its gem of dew;
But nothing shall ever the years renew,
Nor make my dreams depart.

The happy twilight is calm and sweet,
But my soul is sad and lone.
The fading twilight is pure and sweet;
But my heavy heart, and my sluggish feet,
Are bound to a world unknown.

THE SINGING WIND

O, SINGING wind! O, lingering wind!
Bear happy dreams to me
From where my darling sits and sings
And hears the murmurous stir of wings
That fly incessantly.

O, winsome wind! O, wayward wind!
Fly o'er the bending corn
And bear my kisses to her hand,
That plucks the lilies where the land
Is newly washed with morn.

O, lisping wind! O, whisp'ring wind!
Bear back her words to me!
I perish for a single thought;
For life were vain and fame were nought
Without love's company.

CANADIAN POEMS

WRITTEN WHILE SOJOURNING IN LOWER CANADA, 1882 TO 1885

ON MEMPHREMAGOG

Lightly dip the slender oar!
Here the water lilies are;
And yon soft, horizon star
Is the light house on the shore.

As the twilight's deep'ning hush
Lifts the wave's voice on the sand,
Softly reach and drown thy hand
Where the sunset's latest blush

Makes the water rich as wine:
Now thou hast them, fresh and fair!
With the purer lilies there,
Let them on thy breast recline.

All day long our little boat,
Floating on through light and shade,
Has our eager souls conveyed
Like a sentient thing afloat.

We have watched the shadows run
On the hillsides, swift and far,
Flying each in vapor car,
Chased by cohorts of the sun:

Heard the ripples laugh and play
On the emerald islet's shore,
Break and fall and laugh no more,
As the west wind died away.

Mirrored in these floods that lie
Smiling granite hills between,

We have seen the headlands green,
Fickle cloud and steadfast sky;

Passing silhouette, sudden light
With each tint and tender hue
Of the mountain's hazy blue
And the birch wood's mist of white;

Paused to watch the red sun go
Down behind a mountain old,
Turning all its crown to gold,
Molten in a furnace glow;

Kindling wonder-lands of flame,
Weird and mystical and strange
As the splendid thoughts that range
Through a young man's dream of fame;

Glories interchanging slow—
Fields where sun-born spirits fly,
Scarlet winged, through amber sky,
Fading like the long ago.

Floating on these waters calm,
All our lives have been in tune
To that rare, unlettered rune,
Nature's sweet, mysterious psalm:

And our souls have listened long,
Rapt and ravished by the flow
Of the numbers soft and low
In that ultimate of song.

All too deep our bliss, to-day,
Flowed for thought of reel or line;
We are fishers, but decline
Angling where the genii play.

Hellas' dear, immortal throng
Might be resurrected here,—
Satyr, cyclops, muse severe
And sweet Pan with reed and song.

Aye! but how the darkness grows!
Hark, the keel grates on the strand;
Softly, gently let us land,
Leave the song and seek the prose!

Dip no more the laboring oar!
Here our friends and comrades are,
And this soft, horizon star
Is the lighthouse on the shore.

MAGOG RIVER

A FLOOD there is that flows and falls
Where elms their pendant branches lean,
Or, high above its rocky walls
The firs are ever green.

From Memphremagog's burnished skein
Of silver, tangled in the hills,
Its downward leaping course is ta'en,
Amid the roar of mills.

Not thus of old the red man knew
The happy Magog, wild and free;
When flood to flood the waters grew
Rejoicing to the sea.

The rise of trout, the dip of wing,
Its own glad song to rock and glen,
Or stealthy tread of some wild thing,
Alone disturbed it then.

And yet the river seems to feel,
Though bound in traffic's prosy ways
And harnessed to the creaking wheel,
The joy of savage days.

And ever more the poet stream,
That chafes like Pegasus in pound,
Renews its old delightful dream,
While all the mills go round;

And laughs from rock to rock along,
Or rests within its little lake,
Fair as the iris joy of song
The mists of echo make;

And thence again, with eager shout,
Takes up its winsome, bonnie way,
As graceful as the bream and trout
That in its waters play;

Till, leaping down from higher lands,
It joins the broad St. Francis tide,
Where Sherbrooke in her beauty stands
The wedded streams beside.

With spindle's hum and shuttle's noise
The foundries clang, the forges flame;
Here toil is king and men rejoice
And bless the Magog's name.

"Even thus," I cry, "the humble bard,
Who fain would only shout and sing,
Must turn, to win the world's regard,
And do some useful thing.

"Nor yet withhold his tuneful voice,
But sweeten labor with a strain
Whose tones shall linger and rejoice
When he forgets his pain."

THE STRICKEN MONARCH

I

The ragged firs, knee deep in snow,
Stand shivering by the frozen lake,
Where winds from Gaspé, moaning low,
Lift the long drifts and lightly shake
Their icy fragments through the air,
And strew them in the wild beast's lair
And down the gorge and through the brake.

II

And here the monarch of the wood,
With drooping antler, piercing eye,
That tell of thirst and want of food,
Hides where no living thing is nigh;
For in this deeply-drifted snow
The proud beast can no farther go,
And he must rest or he must die.

III

But hark! his quick ears catch the sound
The hunter's gliding snow-shoe makes;
He springs to fly, with sudden bound;
The crust beneath each dark hoof breaks;
He plunges in his icy bath,
He rages with despair and wrath;
The white foam flies in frozen flakes.

IV

He yields at last, but hears once more
The snow-shoes gliding, strives to fly
And wallows helpless, who before

Out-sped the wind: And now to die,
To feel the murderer's coward blow!
Oh, bitter fate! 'Tis done; and lo!
For joy some hungry half-breeds cry.

ICY AIR

A CANADIAN IDYL

I

O! BUDS may break in scarlet bloom
  Where Summer laughs and sings,
And souls be drunken with perfume
  Each vocal zephyr brings;
But here, within this frozen zone,
  We'll weave with patient care,
From vagrant sound and wand'ring tone,
  The song of icy air.

II

The snow is white upon the hill,
  The lake is muffled o'er,
The wood, through all its depths, is still,
  And, by the rocky shore,
The river's voice no more is heard,
  Nor soundeth anywhere
The insects' hum, the chirp of bird,
  To thrill the icy air.

III

But far away, on drifted roads,
  The oxen, plowing slow,

Urged by the drivers' stinging goads,
  Are trampling down the snow;
And bells from yon half-hidden town
  Ring o'er the white despair
A gladness softly fading down
  The waves of icy air.

IV

In distant forests, hungry deer,
  By hungry men pursued,
Plunge through the snow, and touch with fear
  The whole wide solitude;
But in the half-breed's humble shed
  Is little thought of care,
The chase is good, the children fed;
  Who shrinks from icy air?

V

From camps of lumbermen, that sleep
  Beside the frozen stream,
The smoke curls up, and seems to weep
  Above life's faded dream;
For nought gives outward hint to-day
  Of blossom fresh and fair,
Or tender leaf or budding spray,
  To cheer this icy air.

VI

But in the city men may sing,
  And choral numbers flow
In praise of Winter, cheerful King
  Of sleet and ice and snow;
Toboggans glide and skate-steels ring
  And sleigh-bells tinkle there;
But want still walks, a haggard thing,
  To mock this icy air.

VII

In happy homes and loving hearts,
Where peace and comfort dwell,
The winter nought of gloom imparts,—
Their joy cannot dispel:
But what of her who sups the dregs?
Can heaven be still aware
Of all her bitter need that begs
For death's most icy air?

VIII

O God! who watereth every land
Where tropic glories lie,
Let still the shadow of Thy hand
Relume this northern sky;
For song and bloom and springing leaf
Each anxious heart prepare,
And strengthen every sweet belief
To brave this icy air.

PICTURES IN ICE

We knew in the night, when the moon was on high,
And the air was as still as the pulses of death,
Save the roar where the river sent up its white breath,
That the frost was at work on a window near by
With his pencils of ice, and we said morn would show
Mimic glacier and iceberg and miniature floe.

But what was our wonder when all the wide pane,
In the light of the morrow, was instinct with spring,

And radiant with summer and many a fair thing,—
With fern and with lichen, with grasses and grain,
With plumes from the maize and soft straws from the pine,
Trailing sprays from the elm, and slight, wandering vine!

And each was so perfect, so delicate, true,
So faithful to outline, to character, grace,
To every small loveliness, tenderest trace
On corolla, or stem, when its glory is new,
That we blessed the cold spirit whose genius had caught
And quaintly materialized Nature's great thought.

O spirit of frost! there's an impulse divine
Inspiring each crystal that shoots into form
With beauty's ideal, to gladden and charm;
And in these weird, wonderful pictures of thine
We trace the same finger that paints the moth's wing,
And writes the glad notes that the wood-thrushes sing.

What a wonder is this, that the frost which destroys
The fair things of summer, should keep in his heart
Their impress and likeness, to gladden his art
Till it takes, in the hours of his triumphs and joys,
But the frail, lovely forms that his palsying breath
Has consigned with a touch, to the darkness of death!

And, my child, with your soft, dimpled cheek in a glow

At the kiss of the cold, there's a tint of the rose
Sifted into your blood, from the wind as it blows,
And the light in your face, that we mark as you go,
And the grace of your step were previsioned and wrought
By the sensitive touch of God's intimate thought.

O quickening and formative presence divine!
That dwelleth alike in fleet vapor, dull clod,
In world-bearing nebulæ, flowers on the sod,
In heat or in cold, all this glory is thine!
Nor hast thou inspired the frost spirit in vain,
To trace these most exquisite things on the pane.

MAY IN THE NORTH

Now once again on field and hill
The violet's eyes are blue,
The anemone and daffodil
Their loveliness renew.

The birch uncloses tender hands,
The maple sheds its bloom,
But still in sight old winter stands
With threat'ning brow of gloom.

Ay! frown and threaten all you may,
Old tyrant, fierce and strong!
The sun is moving up this way,
I hear the robin's song!

A tremor of the bygone springs
Is quick'ning in my blood;
The children shout, the brooklet sings
"And roars the falling flood."

Once more the emerald grass shall grow
Above the winter's dead,
And summer bend her iris bow
Where clouds were dull as lead.

Here are the blackbirds, and the joy
Of many an olden year
Is in their songs. Come, little boy!
Farewell, gray man austere!

Come, little boy, for you and I
And I and you, are one;
We'll follow where the swallows fly,
We'll cheer the setting sun.

For us the sparrow hides her nest
In copses green and low,
The bluebird suns his purple breast,
The tortoise moveth slow.

The saucy chipmunk digs his hole,
The shining lizard slides,
Her hammock swings the oriole,
The rush-grown pond abides.

For us the worm is in the ground,
The fish is in the stream;
And energy and health abound,
And care is but a dream.

And so, my boy, my little boy,
Be happy while you may!
Your harvests frosts shall not destroy,
Nor shall your wealth decay.

The treasure-trove of childhood hours
Alone survives the years;

Its blossoms are perennial flowers
That memory wets with tears.

The poet sings his sweetest songs
Of youth and vernal skies,
And children walk in joyous throngs
The fields of paradise.

Give me a touch of heaven and spring
And each unfolding leaf,
And bursting bud and sprouting thing
Renews some sweet belief,—

Some sweet belief, some tender thought,
Some memory vague and old,
Some charm the blessing seasons wrought
When love was more than gold;

Till I can smell the budding spice
And feel the woodland hush
Thrilled by that forest cantatrice,
The wildly-warbling thrush.

No more I see the northern pine,
Nor wait the daisies' bloom;
The blue-bells in the fields are mine,
And mine the haw's perfume.

For me the Indiana woods
Put on their best attire,
And all their tangled solitudes
Are glad with youth's desire:

The red bud flames beside the stream,
The orchard boughs are white;
The catbird sings his tipsy dream,
And I sing you "Good night."

TO J. W. R.

IN RESPONSE TO AN OPEN LETTER

I HOLD that he who touches one glad string,
And maketh music for a weary soul,
Brings into life a sweetly gracious thing,
A power to bless, to gladden, to console;
And, Riley, oft in some rare song of thine
Have I perceived this tenderness divine.

But in this "Open Letter" comes to me
That subtlest influence of the poet's art
That tells the poet's love in melody
Which, like a flood, o'erflows the yearning heart,
And sets the pulses beating soft and low
The gentle raptures of the rhythm's flow.

I can but whisper "thanks" a hundred times,
And, reaching out a thousand miles or more,
Cry: "Here, dear friend! I heed your pleading rhymes,
Give me your hand. I'll squeeze it somewhat sore,
And make you shout: Hold on, sir, not so hard!
If that means love, pray give me less regard."

That fickle goddess, Fortune, did you dream
That she is but an idle, lazy sprite,
Who never dares to cross a swollen stream,
Nor brave the perils of a starless night,
And is no partner for a poet's mood
That finds in bitter roots the sweetest food?

Think! had she taken Burns from humble Ayr,
  Dressed him in purple, coddled him with wine,
What hand, inspired by love's incessant care,
  Had given us Bonny Doon or Auld Lang Syne?
The last man lingering when the years have fled,
Shall still hear Homer singing for his bread.

Kind words that speak of sympathetic thought,
  Such as you mention from a late Review,
Are not the "honeyed lies" by Fortune taught,
  For they are thrilled and quickened through
    and through
With human interest in a toiler's fate
Which "fortune's fools" would only desolate.

One bids adieu to youth, if friends increase
  As age comes on, with less of vain regret,
And Eastward-pointing shadows rest in peace
  Where Morning's wandering heliotropes were
    set;
Come sun for shade, for heliotrope love's rose,
To smile and bloom above our last repose!

Anent this theme, my fiftieth birthday brought
  Letters and token from wide-sundered friends,
Filled with the tenderness of kindly thought,
  Like music blown from earth's remotest ends;—
From gray-haired Gallagher, still brave and strong,
The grand old patriarch of Western song,—

From House and Harris, Jordan, Catherwood,
  Julian and Mathews, Cooper,—aye! and more
Than I can mention of our singing brood,
  And from dear friends and neighbors by the
    score;
From mothers, toiling in their busy spheres,
From statesmen, scholars, toil-scarred pioneers.

And all alike are dear, alike are sweet,
As, to a lost child, in a city strange,
A mother's voice is, echoing down the street
Of love's divineness that can never change:
And all these tokens, blending, mingling, make
An amulet I wear for love's dear sake.

Sherbrooke, March 5, 1883

TO J. T. W.

For you who love the sea and the green woods,
The summer sail upon the mountain lake,
The vernal gladness of rejoicing floods,
And all sweet sounds that woodland voices make;
Whose ear is ever close to nature's heart,
Each year must bring a music of its own,
With tenderer chords and more exquisite art
Than any that your former days have known.

And so we cry, from fullest hearts, to-day,
"Long may the genial light and warmth endure,
To shed their bliss about your onward way,
And make a happy future still secure!"
For souls that keep forever young and fair
Have little need to mourn the dying years
That put their snowy blossoms in our hair
And ripen us with mingled joy and tears.

Though many New Years come and Old Years go,
Each sunny season brings its singing bees,
When soft winds sigh and tender blossoms grow,
And Heaven is mirrored in the pulsing seas.

In gentle souls, that kindly nature keeps
  Warmed in her bosom, Summer never dies,
And when above our clay the winter weeps,
  'Twill still be summer in the peaceful skies.

So, happy New Year, happy, happy still,
  To you and all you cherish, far or near,
May good prevail above each passing ill
  And smiles of joy replace each transient tear!
May Heaven bend down to you on sweetest wings,
  And Earth's fair bounties ripen at your feet,
And love and hope and all divinest things
  Conspire to make your happiness complete.

January 1, 1884

SONG OF THE WINTER CARNIVAL

[Montreal, 1884.]

The South has a balmier breath,
  It has wonders of blossom and song;
But its hot airs are freighted with death
  And its cyclones are murderously strong:
In the light of this clear northern sky,
  When Polaris looks down on the snow,
While the Bear and the Lion are high,
  And Orion and Sirius are low,

There's a ring in the skater's swift steel
  And an impulse of joy in the air
That only the North can reveal
  To the spirit long burdened with care:
With the manifold chime of sweet bells
  And the rhythmical motion of sleighs,
What a sea of wild melody swells,
  While the Winter his jewels displays!

Here the sons of proud Albion rejoice
Hand in hand with the children of France,
And the harp of old Erin gives voice
To the hymn of a new world's advance:
Here, Scotia, dear Scotia, to thee
Thy children lift voices of song,
And the Indian, still dauntless and free,
Brings the soul of the wood to the throng.

Here the cross of St. George and the Stars
Of the Union of States are unfurled
Side by side, to the anguish of Mars,
To the peace and the joy of the world:
Then, ho! for the drive and the meet,
For the tramp where the red torches blaze,
For the wonders of river and street,
Glad nights and memorial days.

Give the South oleander and rose,
Let its palms lift their fronds to the sky!
Our delights are at flood when it snows
And the voices of Winter are high:
Wrapped warm in our woolens and furs,
We smile at the wrath of the cold,
As each pulse to activity stirs,
With our hearts waxing eager and bold.

The frost king but works for our gain,
As some magical spirit in dreams,
Builds highways through forest and plain,
And bridges with crystal the streams:
Where the noises of traffic were loud,
And, in Summer, ships swarmed like a fleet,
See the swift-flying coursers, the crowd
With the great river under their feet!

There are visions of fire in the night
Winding up through the streets and the woods,

And breaking afar on the height
  Of Mount Royal, in wandering floods
And errant scintillas of flame,—
  Passing in and out under the trees,
Inconstant as phantoms of fame,
  Or lights on the populous seas.

Down the avenues gay cavalcades
  Are moving to music's glad notes;
The flags and the drums, the cockades,
  The blare from the wide brazen throats
Bid the spirit of Canada soar
  Till the people are wild in their joy,
And the heart of the gray-beard once more
  Leaps up like the heart of a boy.

What splendor the cold and the mist,
  With the genius of man and his toil,
In spite of all powers that resist,
  Have wrought from the Winter's wide spoil!
These crystalline turrets and walls,
  That glow with electrical light,
Were once as the shower when it falls
  Or the dew which distills in the night.

Though to mist all their strength shall return,
  Yet to-day they stand perfect and fair,
And at night they shall sparkle and burn
  Like a fortress of light in the air,
All besieged and defended by fire,
  While the thousands are shouting the fame
Of Nature's warm heart of desire
  Prisoned cold in a temple of flame.

Youth and beauty in mimic array,
  Gay Knights who are guileless as bold,
And Queens who shall bear their mild sway
  Over hearts neither callous nor cold,

Glide and flow like sweet words in a rhyme,
In a world filled with music and light,
On their skates keeping wonderful time
To the song-quickened pulses of night.

Ho! curlers, come "sweep up" the stones
With a shout and a cry of good will!
Swift glide the toboggans from thrones
Of enjoyment built high on the hill:
Here are color and glitter and glow,
Here is warmth in the teeth of the cold,
And health with her roseate glow
"More precious than silver and gold."

Here gather from province and state
The bravest, the fairest, the best,
From the opulent cities that wait
For their ships by the sea, from the West,
Where the lake and the plain and the sky
And the world-feeding people behold
The wondering nations draw nigh
While this new world is nurt'ring the old.

Brave Winter, thy terrors are naught
To the souls of the hardy and free:
Thou shalt live in our tenderest thought,
For Canadians do honor to thee;
Thou foe to effeminate ease,
To the softness that rots and destroys,
And the blight of infectious disease,
We celebrate thee and thy joys!

For our God has appointed this land
Of plenty and peace for our own,
And its treasures and pleasures His hand
With bountiful largess has sown:
We thank Him for mountains and streams,
We thank Him for valleys and plains,

For lakes that are lovelier than dreams,
For pastures, for herds and for grains:

We thank Him for wealth in the mine,
For wealth in the forest and field,
For the harvests we glean from the brine,
And the fruits that the provinces yield;
We thank Him for Winter and snow,
Fair women and storm-nurtured men;
And for freedom that blesses us so,
We thank Him again and again.

Then hurrah! for the carnival time,
For the triumphs of friendship's increase,
For the pleasures unsullied by crime,
For the tourneys and conquests of peace!
Let the eagle and lion be one
In the welcome our people extend,
And their banners that glint in the sun,
Float ever for neighbor and friend!

MEMORIAL VERSES

INDIANA'S DEAD

Oh! sing the funeral roundelay,
  Let warmest tears be shed;
And rear the mighty monuments
  For Indiana's dead.

On many a field of victory
  They slumber in their gore;
They rest beneath the shining sands
  On ocean's sounding shore.

Where frown Virginia's mountain chains,
  By Rappahannock's side,
Upon the heights of Maryland,
  Her gallant sons have died.

The broken woods of Tennessee
  Are hallowed by their blood;
It consecrates Missouri's plains
  And Mississippi's flood.

Kentucky's "dark and bloody ground"
  Is furrowed by their graves;
They sleep in Alabama's soil,
  By Pamlico's dark waves.

And Mississippi's poison swamps,
  Arkansas river ways,
And Pennsylvania's pleasant towns,
  Attest her heroes' praise.

They saw them in the ranks of war,
  O! memory dark with woe!
They saw them yield to death who ne'er
  Had yielded to the foe.

Then weave the chaplets fair and well
To grace each noble name,
That grateful Indiana writes
Upon her scroll of fame.

Her sons have led the battle's van,
Where many fought and fell,
With all th' immortal Gracchi's zeal,
The hero faith of Tell;

And from their fields of glory looked
Their last upon the skies,
And calmly met the honored death
The fallen hero dies.

And in the dreary doubt and gloom,
The sick ward's tainted breath,
Have thousands met the harder fate,
The slow consuming death;

The weary torture day by day,
The fever and the pain,
The yearnings ever at the heart,
The pressure on the brain;

The longing for the gentle voice,
The old remembered song,
And all the dear delights of home
That memory treasures long.

Oh! Indiana's noble dead,
With fadeless wreaths encrowned,
Shall bless the places where they fell
And make them freedom's ground.

Then twine their praise with freedom's song,
Their names with freedom's name,
And make each heart a monument
Of all their deathless fame.

LINCOLN

INDIANAPOLIS, APRIL 30, A. D. 1865

THE voice is hushed, the heart is still,
No light is in the earnest eye
That lately looked on war's wide ill
And wept where fallen heroes lie.

We kindle brightly to thy praise,
We melt in sorrow at thy bier,
And wonder, in the boundless days,
When God shall every truth insphere

In worlds all wisdom, all delight,
What crowns thy spirit brow shall wear,
When, past the terror and the night,
Thou soarest into morning there.

O choral lips of love and song!—
The world's harmonic multitude
That through the ages dim and long,
Have prophesied the coming good,—

Philosopher and saint and seer,
Of every age and race and clime,—
Behold, the promised days are near,
Auroral on the hills of time.

We read the blessed morrow's sign,
That comes to hallow every place,
In every feature, every line
Of that upturned and calmest face.

From this dear sacrifice we learn
The future's full reality,
How freedom's flame shall mount and burn
Above the tomb of slavery.

How age on age shall pile its weight;
Yet through the twilight dim and far,
Among the wise and good and great,
Shall Lincoln shine, a morning star.

The useless lash, the broken chain,
Black swarms of traffic turned to men,
War fruiting with eternal gain,
That ripens into peace again;

These glorify the places where
Thy paths have been, O true and brave!
And these inspire the prairie air
To sing its rest above thy grave.

Rest! patriot, martyr, saviour, friend,
Defender of the poor and weak!
Thy glory shall not have an end
While history has a voice to speak.

SUMNER

Be silent, speech, and hushed the noise of drums;
No idle tumult adds to his renown,
No wild acclaim, as when some hero comes
To meet the unstable homage of the town,
Can give a lustre to that noble name,
Now brightest on the scroll of civic fame.

Hang but one broken fetter on his urn,
Let one black mother only bring her young,
And while the past shall on her soul return,

But teach her child to lisp with faltering tongue
The name of him, the apostle,—him who gave
His life to freedom and the suffering slave.

We cannot honor him, the time is past.
He honored our humanity, he wrought
A work so noble, reared a tower so vast
Of civic truth and never-dying thought,
The age should write in granite where he lies,
"As Aristides just, as Solon wise."

GARFIELD

In vain were our prayers and tears,
And our struggling hopes in vain;
He is dead in the midst of his years,
And the nation bows in tears,
And weepeth above her slain.

He is dead, the tenderly brave,
The humble, yet wisely great;
He goeth down to the grave,
And over the dust of the brave
Boweth, in tears, the State.

He is dead, in the flower of his fame,
In the wealth of his boundless love;
He is dead, but his deathless name,
And the flower of his generous fame
Shall live while the ages move.

O, gray-haired mother! Your grief
Is shared by millions who wait
By the bier of their stricken chief,
And ponder in silent grief
On the future of the State.

O, faithful and patient wife!
What word can the people speak,
To comfort thy shadowed life?
O, patient and faithful wife!
Thou art strong, but we are weak.

Men may tremble and break
Like oaks in the tempest's path,
But the wife, for her darling's sake,
Stands firm, and will not break
In the rush of sorrow's wrath.

"GOD REIGNS AND THE NATION LIVES."
And the life of our fallen chief
A halo of glory gives
To the fame of the land that lives
Though stricken and filled with grief.

"God reigns!" and the nations move
To the light of a broader day;
To the music of infinite love
The tribes and the nations move,
Though error may bar the way

And the murderer's hand of hate
Strike down the truest and best:
Still forward moveth the State,
And love grows stronger than hate
As the days go down the west.

The seasons shall bloom and fade,
And the silent stars look down
On the spot where his dust is laid
For ages, nor yet shall fade
One color of his renown.

Nor granite nor brass shall hold
So strongly in their embrace
The story his life has told,

As the souls of men shall hold
Forever its matchless grace.

Lover of freedom and man,
Child of the people was he:
Leader in truth's bright van,
Lover of freedom and man,
'Tis the people who weep for thee!

MORTON

Look on this statue, standing dark and bold
And gazing Southward with a dauntless eye,
And feel once more the presence that controlled
The broods of faction wed to treason's lie,
Trod them beneath his feet and led the van*
Where stricken freedom's eagles soared and where
The bayonet upheld the rights of man,
And war's dread echoes drowned the voice of prayer.

And this is Morton! History writes his name
In burning letters on her sacred scroll;
Young men reflect with wonder on his fame,
And older men, who knew him soul to soul,
Almost forget he had his loves and hates,
His strong ambitions, little joys and griefs,
Battled, as other men, with adverse fates
And nursed his inner world of sweet beliefs.

Who, gazing on a mountain's lofty brow,
High-towering in the sunlight, cares to mark

*Governor Morton, though not a military leader, followed the Indiana soldiers to the front, filled them with his own enthusiasm, and cared for their wants so persistently that he, in fact, became their leader.

The flowering cacti on its sides, or how
Its front is ploughed with ravines deep and dark;
Or hears the birds that warble sweet and low
Where osiers bloom and happy brooklets run?
Men seek not these, they only care to know
This is a mountain, on its head the sun.

The world knew Morton when his nerves were steel
And tense and straitened in his country's need,
When all his cares were for the common weal
And he was bold in thought and quick in deed,—
So history paints him, brave and strong and true
And tow'ring sunward, born to high command,
With Cromwell's zeal, with Cæsar's strength to do
And Lincoln's love for home and native land.

Let him who criticises, carps and scolds,
And blames the mountain that 'tis not a plain,
Go hence and grumble! History's genius holds
Our Morton's impress sacred; Hate is vain
To change its features; love as vainly cries
That "he was generous, loyal, kind of heart."
This ruler of men, this man of high emprise,
Has now become of History's self a part.

DECORATION ODE

Brave defenders of our Union,
Lovers of our native land,
Here once more in sweet communion
At your honored graves we stand.
Freedom's banner waving o'er us,
Freedom's fire in every breast,
While we join the sacred chorus,
Memory sings above your rest.

Ye, who died to save the nation,—
Make it Freedom's home for aye,
Unto you this decoration,
Flowers and wreaths we bring to-day.
Oh, may North and South united
Banish hatred, doubt and strife,
And, with faith in union plighted
Triumph in the war of life!

Unto Thee, the Heavenly Giver,
We devoutly, humbly pray
Thou wilt save the land forever
From the tyrant's blighting sway;
Take our people in Thy keeping,
Guard from luxury, vice and crime;
Make us purer, make us worthy
Of this choicest fruit of time.

Choicest fruit of all the ages,
Liberty and law and peace;
Let the wisdom of the sages
In the people's will increase.
Make us purer, make us worthy;
Like these heroes let us be
Consecrated, dedicated
Evermore to liberty.

AT MT. McGREGOR

The man who lies dead at McGregor
Was great where the greatest were weak;
Where the great were imperious and haughty,
Was modest and childlike and meek.

"And what shall we write to his glory,—
What monuments build to his fame?"

Keep silence! He wrote his own story;
'Tis signed with his own deathless name.

He obeyed, he commanded, he conquered,
Saved the Union, gave freedom increase;
Saw the world doing homage before him,
And said to the world, "Be at peace!"

Then let us have peace for his ashes,—
The Nation's wide empire their urn,—
For his is a fame that surpasses
The power of our time to discern.

All great things are seen from a distance,
Or seen but in parts, at the best;
Our leader is safe for the future,
The present bequeathes him its rest.

LONGFELLOW

THEY say that Longfellow is dead,
That his form lieth low in the clay;
That his vision prophetic has fled
From the light and the gladness of day.

But they who speak thus must be wrong,
For just now I was with him in Spain,
And heard the improviso's song,
And the muleteer's mountain refrain.

Then we wandered through Europe once more,
And saw it with eyes that were young;
His eyes that looked into all lore
And knew every classical tongue.

At Nuremburg's haunted old town
We revelled with Dürer in art,
And quaffed at the beverage so brown,
That warmed Sach's musical heart.

And the Rhine that we wandered beside
Is a stream that no mortals have known
Except those rare spirits that bide
In poesy's magical zone.

There Goethe and Schiller sang loud,
Philosophy, Germany, art,
And Müller's melodious crowd
Sang low to the love-burdened heart.

Then, dropping each hindrance of time,
And pluming the Spirit's wide wings,
We neared the great summit sublime,
Where Sandalphon, the prayer-angel, sings.

Now turned with The Angels to bless
The homes and the hearthstones of men,
Repeating, with rhythmical stress
The Psalm of Life over again.

Love, beautiful, deathless, divine,
By the dark waves of Minas we met,
Where the winds taught the hemlock and pine
Songs of longing and sighs of regret.

But Evangeline faded too soon,
Like a star on the brink of the morn,
Like a rose in the fullness of June,
Like a solo far wound from the horn.

Then how sweet were The Voices of Night,
When The Wind o'er the Chimney was high!
And The Flowers were all breathing delight,
As The Footsteps of Angels drew nigh.

Strains of love and of longing arose—
  It was Sweet Chibiabas in Song;
We heard the wild chant to its close,
  Then danced with fierce Kwasind, the strong:

And all through the glad summer day
  The gentle Dakota spake low
To her chief, as he led the long way,—
  "My husband, with you will I go."

John Alden, the faithful and true,
  Miles Standish, rough, generous and bold,
And the tales that the travelers knew,
  And the priests with their legend of gold;

All charmed us away from our pain,
  Singing paradise rather than wrath,
Till we turned us to hang up the crane
  And gather the Sweet Aftermath,

What! Longfellow dead, did you say?
  Do we cherish and love him in vain?
You are wrong, for I know that this day
  Thousands walk with the poet in Spain.

PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE

Oh, weep for him, ye ever moaning pines!
  Ye green palmettoes by the summer sea,
Bend low your heads for him who low reclines!
  He loved you well; his soul to melody
Was stirred forever by the south wind's play,
The ocean's voice, the mock-bird's checkered lay.

Weep for the poet! When the poet dies
  There be some souls that, through the noisy
    years,

Heard far and heeded, and did not despise
His voice of gladness, half suppressed by tears,
Who pause and query: "Wherefore toil and sow?
There is no sunshine; how shall harvests grow?"

Sunshine and music are the poet's dower;
He sings, and lo! the land is wed to fame:
It may have wealth and excellence and power,
But o'er them all men write the poet's name;
'Tis Burns's land or Schiller's clime or Hayne's:
O'er every ruler's right the poet reigns.

Now silent are the notes that trembled sweet
As thrushes warbling in the western woods,
Or murmurs where ecstatic waters meet
To join in gladness their related floods.
Men cry, "Farewell!" and linger and bewail:
The beckoning future whispers softly, "Hail!"

Nor chivalry, nor knightly deed shall wake
For thee, O Sun-kissed South! the world's acclaim,
As his glad notes that trembled for thy sake;
For he who bore Carolina's dearest name
Could touch the wondrous heart of man, and move
Its chords to song, its every pulse to love.

The man is dead; the bard shall never die;
Though clay lie cold and eloquent voice be stilled,
The poet lingers; wood and field and sky
And the far spaces by his soul are filled.
For him all times and seasons shall remain,
And thy best name, O South! shall still be Hayne.

SONNETS

W. B. V.

Oh, mountain monarchs of the mighty west!
Cradle him gently, lying at your feet;
Fold him, O nature! softly to thy breast,
And strew thy daisies o'er his dreamless rest!
No more for him the murmurs of the street,
Nor shout of mountain waters as they meet,
Nor songs that echo when the wine is best
From life's young vintage; but the blessed calm
That broods forever o'er the poet's tomb,
Warm with the fragrance of immortal bloom,
And breathes through all the year a happy Psalm;
A Psalm of thanks that poet souls are given
To bless the earth and sing the joys of heaven.

M. LOUISA CHITWOOD.

For her who died so young and wondrous fair—
A female Keats—some Shelley should arise,
To deck her tomb and crown her golden hair
With wreaths as lovely as her own brown eyes,
Weeping in song, with bowed, melodious head,
As he who wept for Adonais dead.
Fair was her morn, hope-tinged with golden red;
Its promise full, its joys before her spread,
Broad as the world. How soon, alas! they fled,
And she, whose soul to music's soul was wed,
Lay spotless, still and beautiful, but dead.

And yet not dead; the works her hands had
wrought
Preserve her sweetly to the world of thought,
And give their glory to her narrow bed.

ON SEEING SOME OLD LETTERS FROM MRS. HETTIE ATHON MORRISON.

Here lie her letters, fresh as yesterday,
Full of sweet flat'ry for my faulty rhymes;
Here wit and pathos, interchanging, play
Like praise and gladness in the Sabbath chimes;
And though I never saw her, never knew
The patient face that suffering limned with care,
Still, budding rose and violet, bursting blue,
And apple blossoms sweet and lily fair
Shall long recall her genius; the perfume
Of that rare life which poets wreathe and sing,
A thrill of heaven that quickens in the gloom,
A joy that consecrates the humblest thing.
O poet soul, divinely fair and young,
Thou singest now with never-wearying tongue.

M. J. W.

AT DAWN, FEB. 25, 1865

And is she dead, the ever hopeful one?
The loving life that seemed but just begun,
So quickly past, and all its guerdons won?

And have we watched her feet, as, day by day,
From childhood's sinless hours of sport and play,
To womanhood's more elevated way,

She trod, with firm and ever new delight,
Along the paths of knowledge, gaining might
To wield in future battles for the right,

Alone to see them tremble, pause and fail
On the glad hills, and turn to walk the vale
Where night and gloom. decay and grief prevail?

The hopes we cherished for her future years
Are gone forever; through our falling tears
All but the last and brightest disappears.

The last and brightest! in our doubt and gloom
It throws to heaven the beauty of its bloom,
And drowns the death-smell under its perfume.

That blessed hope that teaches, in our pain,
That never noble life was lived in vain,
And even death dispenses greatest gain.

Her feet no more enclogged by earthly clay,
Mount upward now, in their celestial way,
Swift as the young lark soars to meet the day.

Upward forever on those hills of light,
Where love's effulgence banishes the night,
And every step reveals some new delight;

Where knowledge cometh not through toil or pain,
But sweetly falleth like the summer rain,
And fills the spirit with a boundless gain;

A gain expanding through eternal years,
While, to its never-ebbing flow, inheres
The peace and wisdom of diviner spheres;

There faith establishes her paths, and there
Love looketh with her eye of gentle care,

And breathes through Christ, the merciful, a
prayer;

When life shall pause and drop the numbering
glass,
And death pronounce the midnight's solemn mass,
Bidding our good or evil forward pass,

That we may enter, with no selfish dread,
The silent army of the happy dead,
To follow where her morning walk has led.

THE CHILDREN

The many voices of the noisy day
Can never hush the echoes of our grief,
Nor little pleasures, vanishing and brief,
Nor formal strength of any cold belief,
For sorrow hath above them all her way.

But even sorrow bears a gentle heart;
Subdued and pensive in our thought she dwells,
Assuages mirth and boisterous joy dispels,
And drops into the Spirit's deepest wells,
The anchors of her sure prevailing art.

And often in the hour of joy she comes,
And with the faces of the children calls
My soul away from all the festal halls,
The flickering lights, the rows of painted walls,
To the sweet country and its sweeter homes.

The little graves I know are by the wood,
The children's school is very near at hand,
And nearer still the little church doth stand;
A mile away dear father owned some land,
And there the children grew so fair and good.

'T was in the grove of maples, lovely trees,
  The children chattered at their little plays,
  And sported in their simple country ways,
  And hours of love grew into lovely days,
And so they lived and grew in joyous ease.

But when there neared a time of wild despair,
  When death was curdling all the sister's blood,
  She bade me take her gently as I could,
  Into the shadows of that pleasant wood,
Once more, once more, to breathe its balmy air.

Her thankful eyes, her failing, thankful voice,
  I see, I hear; I never shall forget
  The sad-eyed brother with his cheeks so wet;
  Through all the years I see the children yet;
I see them yet, nor have I any choice,

But pour my soul in a melodious rain,
  Half tears and half a melancholy rune,
  A roundelay for those who died so soon,
  A slender thread of song in saddest tune,
A rill of music from a fount of pain.

They could not dwell apart, for flowed the tide
  Of their sweet lives, as waters in one rill:
  The sister died, the brother smiling still
  Passed on, his little mission to fulfill,
A few short days, then rested at her side.

Where are the children? in what pleasant dawns
  Do they arise to hear the morning bird,
  To see the glittering dew drops lightly stirred
  On pendant sprays, to call the bleating herd
From their green breakfast on the emerald lawns?

Or, when the sun goes down at shut of day,
  To watch the wonder of the painted mist,—

Now waves of gold, now domes of amethyst,
Now bowers of rest where angels might keep tryst,
And shout with joy to see the bright array?

Perhaps all seasons where the children roam
In their ethereal life, are times of praise,
And they, forgetful of our little days,
Move on and on in ever widening ways
Of joy and bliss in their celestial home.

They are not out of God, they cannot be
Dissevered wholly from us, though they tread
In unknown paths; but yet we know them dead;
Their forms are dust, their little lusters fled.
They are but ashes, ashes! what are we?

What! they but ashes! Do we vainly trust,
That these poor bodies which so soon decay
Are but the caskets, wrought of finest clay,
In which we hide each through his little day,
Then soar away and let them go to dust?

I cannot think of death as aught but change;
The eggs must break to let young eagles out,
The acorns burst before the oaks can sprout
And the worn body sink in gloom and doubt,
To give the spirit free to widest range.

The years we live are but a passing breath,
But one poor quaver in an endless song,
A ripple, where a million oceans throng;
And he who tarries longest stays not long
From the unknown results that follow death.

Whatever those results may be, we trust
That nothing harms the children, nothing ill
Befalls them on their journeys, love's sweet will

Is ever more the law that guides them; still
We cannot choose but weep above their dust.

Somewhere in this wide universe they dwell;
Somewhere they wander onward, as of old,
From joy to joy in cycles manifold
As are the worlds on night's blue chart unrolled;
I know not where; God knows, and all is well.

AT MY FATHER'S GRAVE

HERE is the grave!
My father is not here;
The cherished life he gave
Did only disappear
From our sad eyes that watched, as in a dream,
What time he shivered in the icy stream,
Then with a burst of joy, remembered evermore,
Stepped from the waters to the heavenly shore.

Here is the grave!
About it are the trees;
Above their branches wave;
The summer symphonies
Float o'er this lovely, hallowed spot where he,
When mother died, delighted much to be,
For here she rests, here at her head there stand
Cedar and willow, planted by his hand.

Here is the grave!
And here our other dead.
When storms do wildly rave
Above each lowly head
The sleepers reck not, but when robin sings,
And all the wood birds come, on fleetest wings,

I can but deem their spirits linger here
And bathe in this delightful atmosphere.

Here is the grave!
  His ashes here repose,
Love boundless, rich to save;
  Forgiveness for his foes;
The love he trusted, the forgiveness gave,
And, to no bitter thought in death a slave,
He cast his clay behind him with a smile;
And thus he passed, a soul that knew no guile.

TO F. R.

ON THE DEATH OF HIS MOTHER

THERE is no comfort in an idle word
  When sorrow touches all the strings of life,
And voiceless sadness, with a step unheard,
  Glides through the halls and stills the noise of strife.

There is no music in the flow of song
  To ears that covet silence, or that ache
For words whose echoes have been memories long,
  Renewed forever for a dear one's sake.

And yet a friend may come, without offense,
  And offer tribute to a mother's worth;
For well he knows the sorrow, the intense
  Deep anguish of a child when the cold earth

Falls on a mother's coffin, and he feels
  That light and love and joy are gone away;
And no fond dream of future bliss reveals
  To his sad eyes so sweet, so glad a day

As any single day of all the past
Wherein she cradled him upon her knee,
Or watched his toddling steps increasing fast
In strength and purpose, and benignantly

Gave of her life and toils increasing store
Of blessings on his head, as years went by,
Until the heart that gave could give no more,
The soul that blessed sought blessedness on high.

Ah me! the sorrow for a mother's death
No pen can paint, no tender strain reveal;
Words are but clamor, song an idle breath,
And filial grief stabs like the dull, cold steel.

But yet, to him who looks beyond the tomb
For life's best outcome, there is solace, hope,
For, as a flower of never-fading bloom,
A mother's face lights up the future's scope.

More musical than music's soul the voice,
The mother voice that fills our sunniest dreams,
Of that fair land where we shall yet rejoice
As guileless children by the happy streams.

O mothers, mothers! we shall come to you,
And as you gladdened when the anguish past
And we were born, so shall your joys renew
When we are with you safely housed at last.

A mother's love outreacheth time and change,
It is compassion more compassionate;
Intense, yet broad as life's divergent range,
It follows, follows, like a haunting fate.

No heaven so high it cannot bless us there,
No hell so deep it dare not tempt to save;
It will not falter even when despair
Were happiness, and a delight the grave.

The child who knows such love can never know
Forgetfulness of her who gave it him;
He may be wrecked on darkest shores of woe,
Or pain may rack and rend him limb by limb,

Or sin may blight, or passion burn him dry,
But through all depths the mother love shall hold
Its stellar glory in his spirit's sky,
In his soul's rubbish be the coin of gold.

O mother love, call home, call home to thee
Thy wandering children, when the day is done,
And when the lights go out for us, and we
Lie down to rest, our little courses run,

Be it in hope that on some future morn,
Sooner or later, in the sinless lands,
The souls whose joy was great when we were born
Shall lead us with their dear maternal hands,—

Their dear maternal hands, where love endures,
And is requited, where the poet's dream
Of heaven and happiness no more allures
And vanishes like shadows on a stream,

But is the substance of most real things,
The primal joy of joys that shall increase,
Sweet as the murmurous stir of angel wings,
That smooth war's front with messages of peace.

THE WHITE WATER BAR

[Read at the annual Bar Picnic, Saturday, June 30th, 1883]

I RECOGNIZE your able plea
And make my answer true;
Though every old authority
Declare all law and equity
And precedent with you.

I fain would join you on the green,
Where youthful Summer stands
In woods that rise, the fields between,
Which Ceres rules—a peaceful queen,—
And sows with bounteous hands:

Where wigless lawyer, lawyer meets,
And ungowned judges walk;
Where Friendship scatters myriad sweets
More precious than the bard's conceits
Or any learned talk.

But distance, which "enchantment lends"
Restrains the eager thought
Of long-loved scenes and absent friends,
And so my homeward vision ends,
A blossom fruiting nought

But memories fair of other days
And love that waiting stands
To pipe your joy in hopeful lays,
Or fly across the weary ways
To shake your friendly hands.

Since Blackstone bade his lyre farewell
And turned him with a sigh,

To garner up the law and tell
To ages, that should love him well,
Its truth and majesty,

I doubt if any land has shown
A bar with higher aims
Than this White Water vale has known,
Or one whose history has been strown
With more deserving names.

Deserving names! a noble throng!
Yet memory holds but few
Of all, to shrine in slender song:
No matter! Each shall linger long
In loyal souls and true.

Here, O. H. Smith, Websterian, strong,
And sprightly Rariden,
Quick witted, brilliant, led the throng
Of younger men, who moved along
The legal foot-paths then.

Here, Blackstone of the early bar,
Safe Newman built his fame,
And Parker shone a splendid star,
And Cale. Smith's silvery tongue afar
Wafted the Hoosier name.

Here, too, the mind of Perkins grew
Judicial, earnest, broad;
And Elliott, patient, honest, true,
Lived out his life, and rose from view,
A just Judge to his God.

And Nimrod Johnson, poet soul,
Whose life was like a lute,
Attuned to tender thought's control,
Here early won his aureole,
And here grew cold and mute.

And here McCarty, Borden, Reed,
Farquhar and Holland rose;
Each measured knowledge by his deed,
And won the earnest lawyer's meed,
And gained the sure repose.

Here Leonard grew of hero mold,
To die in Freedom's Cause;
And Johnson's stately years were told;
And Polk knew honor's touch of gold;
And Woodward won applause.

Be kindly thought a moment staid
Where safe our neighbor's keep
The spots where Hackleman is laid,
Where Robinson's low bed is made,
And Sleeth and Sexton sleep.

And Walter March, above whose clay
The clods are broken yet,
Learned, gifted, open as the day,
And simple as a child at play!
Who shall his fame forget?

'Twas here that patriot giant grew,
Who in the stormy days
Held firm the ship while tempests blew,
Till all the watchful nations knew
Triumphant Morton's praise.

We knew his steps that others see
Through fame's empurpled view;
The brave, strong man, who dared to be
A leader then; his memory
To us is ever new!

But think not all the wise are dead
This lovely vale can claim;

For yet full many a stately head
Survives where honor's light is shed,
To share a generous fame.

Round gray-haired Perry, Yaryan, Test,
What crowding memories throng!
They knew White Water as "The West,"
When lawyers were in buckskin dressed
And circuit rides were long.

They knew when all the country round
Came up through storm and cold,
To hear the Judge's charge profound,
And listen to the eloquent sound
The pleader made of old.

They knew when from Ohio's side
To swampy Kankakee,
The lawyer would on horseback ride,
And never dream of wounded pride—
In quest of cause and fee.

But reminiscence often tires
When hope is full and strong;
The young man struggles and aspires,
And thus are kept alive the fires
Of Law as well as song.

White Water bears an honored name,
No time nor change can mar;
Be yours to magnify its fame,
Increase its glory, add no shame,
But many a growing star.

And now, lest you should file *complaint*,
Demur, or pray *divorce*,
I think this echo, far and faint,
Had best withdraw its pleadings quaint,
And let law have its course.

Sherbrooke, June 23, 1883

J. T. E.

A JUST JUDGE

[OBIT—Feb. 12, 1876]

NOT his to sound the Attic shell
  Nor touch the lyre attuned to please
The souls of nations yet to be;
  Not his immortal Tully's spell
Of witching eloquence that rose
  Above all minor melodies;
Nor his the lurid fame that glows
  O'er war's red field of agonies.

But deep within his soul there lay
  The wealth that passeth every praise,
  The glow from old Astrean days,
The light that fadeth not away.

To him was justice all divine,
  A blind, sweet goddess living still
  Untrammeled by the venal will
That ever works a sure decline.

Great in his native strength of thought
  In calm pursuance of an end,
  In truth to client, love to friend,
Such life is never lived for naught.

We weaker men imagine more
  And weave more garlands 'round the truth;
  He saw her naked in his youth
And loved her thus forever more.

His wrath was kindled when he saw
The forms of fraud and wrong arise,
And march victorious in disguise
Of specious plea, or wicked law.

To him the law was justice's shield,
And that which cherished wrong or hate,
In jurist's dictum, code of state,
But so much mildew on its field.

But wherefore speak his worth in song?
For song is idle and shall pass,
Like flying shadows in a glass,
While truth and honor tarry long.

Aye! truth and honor tarry late,
And ever welcome guests are they,
Renewing noble names for aye,
With the swift finger-touch of fate.

And they shall still his worth commend,
Who bears amid the throng no blame,
Where many bless his spotless name
As husband, father, neighbor, friend.

BILLY ATKISON

And so you say that Billy's dead,
And that his hand no more shall make
The tempting pie, the pudding brown,
The queenly wedding cake.

No more his sleek, black face shall shine
In grateful pleasure, when with praise
Of stew or roast, strong men combine
The sable cook's deft ways.

Ah! Billy, tho' your face was dark,
Your heart was warm, your friendship true,
And those be worthy tears that fall
In earnest grief for you.

And now whene'er at cheerful board,
The oyster fry, the savory stew,
Shall fill our senses with delight,
We'll think, old friend, of you.

And tho' the jest and laugh go round
As they were wont to do before,
The mirth will be less rude and loud
Because you are no more.

And we shall ponder on the soul
That lit with warmth your kindly face,
And wonder where it wanders free
In what untrodden space.

And then the silent prayer will rise
To him who doeth all things best,
"Wherever Billy is to-day,
God give him peaceful rest."

MY MOTHER

O, MOTHER! in that blessed clime,
Where thou hast found a peaceful rest,
Do ever thoughts and loves of time
Return into thy gentle breast?
And does thy happy spirit see,
Or cast one loving thought to me?

O mother! I have wander'd far
From all my childhood's dear delights;
Grown weary of life's sick'ning war,

And every pleasure that invites,
I bow my aching head and weep,
Dear mother, where thy ashes sleep.

When shall I share this rest with thee?
When shall I be as low as thou,
And waken in the morn to see
The crown of glory on thy brow?
O mother still remember me,
Till I again rejoice with thee.

AS A SHEAF FULLY RIPE

A. W., JULY 6, 1878

As a sheaf that is fully ripened, the Reaper
Gathered the good man home to his rest,
And the pallid form of the dreamless sleeper
Lieth low in the dear Earth's breast:
In the breast of the Earth, the fond old mother
That turneth our clay to the sweetest things,
To flowers that bloom and vines that smother,
And grains and grasses and murmuring wings;

The rose on the cheek of the budding maiden,
The splendor that falls on the sun-set sky,
The lips that are sweet with love-dews laden,
And all beautiful forms that wander by.

Ah, well! but the man himself!—who guesses
In what far realms, what spiritual places
He wanders on in a light that blesses
His vision clear with the dear old faces
That shone about his path in the morning,
When life was sweet as a pictured psalm,
And his soul was unchilled by the solemn warning
We read in death's imperious calm?

A sheaf fully ripened, not scorched nor blighted,
Its fruitage as perfect and pure as his life
That bore the sweet faith, that all wrongs shall be
righted
And the Earth cease, at last, to be crimsoned by
strife;
A sheaf fully ripened, and garnered in gladness
That shouteth all praise to life's labor well done,
No touch on his face of death's premature sadness;
A sheaf fully ripened, his victories were won.

FAIREST FLOWERS OF CHIVALRY

[FOR DECORATION DAY]

RAISE again the patriot song,
Sound the martial notes anew,
Though our heroes slumber long
And the grass is cool with dew
Where they bivouac silently;
While the never-sleeping stars,
Great Arcturus and red Mars,
Guard their rest so patiently.

Sound the bugle, roll the drum,
They have slept a score of years—
Let the happy children come
Strewing flowers instead of tears;
In the sunshine, pleasantly,
Scattering leaf and bud and bloom
On each consecrated tomb
Where they lie contentedly.

Those who wish to, may forget
All their wondrous sacrifice,

How they stifled each regret,
And for freedom paid the price;
Dying uncomplainingly
For the Union and the laws
And the bondman's righteous cause—
Fairest flowers of chivalry.

But with us who loved them when
Stricken Freedom's outcry drew
Beardless youths and gray-haired men
Where her menaced eagles flew,
And their blood flowed like a sea;
As the gathering years increase,
Love for them grows with their peace,
Multiplying endlessly.

Children, who were yet unborn
When these soldiers halted last,
Come, like spirits of the morn,
When the weary night is past,
And with youthful sympathy
Lift your souls in song anew,
Naming those who died for you
In the war's wild agony.

Fear not to disturb their rest;
These were heroes tried and true,
Men who died to make bequest
Of true Liberty to you,
And to all whose lot may be
Cast in this new world of ours,
Where new States, like opening flowers,
Gather on the nation's tree.

These were men who loved us well,
And your patriot noise and song,
Should they enter where they dwell,

With the happy-hearted throng
Clothed in immortality,
Would but speak to them how well
Freedom's soul survives the hell
Born of Treason and Slavery;

Still survives, forgiving all
Those who for the error strove,
And from State to State doth call,
In the sovereign name of love—
"Come fair sisters, cheerily,
Join together hands and hearts;
In the realm of peaceful arts
Let your future conquests be."

"Come ye brave men who obeyed
Voices of misgoverned States,
And in war's dread ranks arrayed,
Battled, like destroying fates,
For "the lost cause," fearlessly;
Blend your strength, mature, to-day,
In the march that moves away
To the future hopefully;

"Where Confederate gray no more
Contrasts with the Federal blue,
And the flag that goes before
Is the one our fathers knew;
And 'one flag, one destiny,'
Is the legend that it bears,
And the people's hopes and prayers
And strong arms its shield shall be.

"Happy children of the brave
Wearers of the gray or blue,
Lo! these starry banners wave
With the world's best hope for you!

Yours the land's prosperity
Blooming from these graves so low;
Yours to reap as yours to sow,
Are these realms perpetually.

"Bind them, then, with iron thongs,
Nerve them with the singing wires;
Make them vocal with the songs
Sung by steam and red forge fires;
On the mountains, by the sea,
Down the valleys fair and wide,
Make them beauteous as a bride
Flushed with love's expectancy.

"And through all and over all,
Gladdening labor, warming art,
Blessing cot and stately hall,
Pulsed by every noble heart,
Let your mutual love agree
With your mutual interest; then
Shall a prosperous race of men
Save the Union endlessly."

Thus in hope we strew the flowers
Where our patriot dead repose;
Garlands fresh from budding bowers,
Lilac fair and queenly rose,
Speaking love's supremacy;
Immortelles of angel white,
Violets blue as skies at night,
Heartsease blooming tenderly.

Thus, with many loving word,
Eloquent tongues their deeds rehearse;
Oratory's voice is heard,
And the feebler trill of verse,
While the drums pulse mournfully,

And the mellow bugles blow
As they blew so long ago
When they marched so valiantly.

Soon these annual rites shall pass,
And these fragrant blossoms fade;
But for them shall bloom the grass,
And the sunlight chase the shade,
Birds still singing happily,
Many a day and many a year,
While the world shall hold them dear,
Slumbering here victoriously.

A. C. D.

JAN. 30TH, 1879

THE bloom of his manhood
Has faded away;
The joy of his morning,
The strength of his day,
Ere his evening had fallen,
Are over for aye.

And now lowly he lieth
And sweet is his rest,
Where the earth, like a mother,
Holds fast to her breast
The cold, pallid sleeper
Who lieth at rest.

His labors are ended,
His story is told!
But they say that he dwells
In a heavenly fold,

And sings to the sensitive
  Harpstrings of gold.

Be it so, yet nought sweeter
  Shall fall from his tongue
Than the life that he lived
  Ere his dirges were sung,—
Life of love flowing on
  From a soul ever young.

And its memory sweetens
  The grief where his home
Waiteth long for the footsteps
  That never shall come,
And it rests like the shadow
  Of peace on his tomb.

Early friend of my childhood,
  This torn myrtle spray
On thy shrine in affection
  I tenderly lay;
It will fade, but thy memory
  Shall fade not away.

HUMOROUS AND DIALECT POEMS

TO J. M. T.

POET AND NOVELIST, ON HIS APPOINTMENT TO THE OFFICE OF STATE GEOLOGIST

O POET! prone to woods and fishes,
  Whose songs were late of bream and trout,
And those dear Edens of our wishes
  Where rivers sing and brooklets shout,
Touched now by low Silurian numbers,
  Wilt henceforth tune a fossil shell
To wake Cyathus from her slumbers,
  Or move the Soul of Rhynconell?

Alas! to old Zaphrentian graces
  Must wood-nymphs yield thy many charms,
And thrush and robin see their places
  Assumed by dim Primordial forms?
Or upward with the advancing ages,
  Shall Ammon's horn proclaim thy song?
Whom triolet no more engages
  Shall he to Trilobite belong?

This plant Pentacrinal shed blossom
  Some fifteen million years ago;
How warms it now thy poet bosom
  With long Polypean afterglow?
Dost pant for wild Selachian pleasures
  Where strong Devonian billows roll?
Or tunest thou those clinking measures
  That vulgar people christen Coal?

O Hippogriff! 'tis sorrow for us
To look upon this comic thing!
Thy poet rides the Plesiosaurus
Or flies on Pterodactyl's wing;
Mid groves of ancient Sigillarias
He'll chant Bellerophon's sinuous rhyme,
Or praise sweet Ganoid Amblypterus,
While Labyrinthodonts keep time.

In mesozoic modulations
His notes shall find conchiferous range,
With Bacalitic variations
And vigorous Squalodontal change;
Down laughing vales Post-tertiary
He'll lead the Megatherium bound
With strings of thyme and sweet rosemary
While Glyptodons are capering round.

We Talc to thee on Gneiss descending
En Trap our Souls with Golden sound,
And, while thy genius goes Hornblending,
May Apatite for song be found!
However Serpentine thy Traces,
Lift high the Alabaster brow,
Beware of saucy Gypsum graces
And quaff in Quartz thy nectar now!

Revere thy ancient muse and greet her,
If the Gal-ena where thou see,
Nor Shale thy new found loves defeat her
Though Tufas muses e'er may be;
If Faults they have or Dislocations
Where Dikes of common earthy thought
Outcrop through many fair Striations,
Don't Mica Strike, these things are naught!

In brief, O poet Southern-hearted!
Whose soul is full of tropic balms,

We mourn thee not as one departed,
For, neath thy Carboniferous palms
We still shall hear thy Shell a-ringing
Through many a Palæozoic rhyme,
And, now and then, recall thee, singing,
To this long afternoon of time.

COURTSHIP AT THREESCORE AND TEN

HIS LETTER

Dear Penina, I've been thinking,
While the sun was sinking low,
Of the past, and deeply drinking
From the springs of long ago;
And, somehow, through mists of sadness,
One fair form arises still,
Filling all my soul with gladness,
Charming me from every ill.

Looking westward, sat I dreaming
In the fading light of day,
Till again I saw the gleaming
Of a church spire far away,
And the people, happy-hearted,
Going through the open door:—
You, a bride, that day departed
And my heart was bruised and sore.

Youth is strong to turn from sorrow,
"Hope springs ever in the breast,"
And there came a brighter morrow
Where my soul found peace and rest,
While my hands toiled for another,
Fairer than the blush of morn,

When the mist sprites kiss each other
And the dew is on the corn.

* * * *

All is past, and death has only
Left, of old friends, you and me;
Ah! why should we wander lonely,
Sorrowing by a shoreless sea?
Age should never chill affection,
Love survives both time and tide;
Urge me not some trite objection;
Hasten to me; be my bride.

Spring shall come with sprouting willows,
Streams shall thaw and maples bloom,
And the warm south air in billows
Flow above the winter's tomb;
Bluebells swinging, robins singing,
And the noise of bleating herds
Call to us, the message bringing,
"Be ye happy with the birds!"

HER ANSWER

Your letter's cum to han, sir, an I'm told
You've done quite well in gittin lans an gold
An worldly gear; much better than I thought
You would when I was young; an when you sought
My han, ef you remember, an I sed
"I liked you, but my heart belied my head,"
Adden, as best I could, a choken back the tears,
That "marryin means for all the comin years."
"You're good," said I, "an stiddy, brave an true;
But poets can't make ends meet;" an so you
Stood there a pleadin, with your tearful eyes,
Till all the world seemed full of grief an sighs;

But this ere level head of mine sed "No!"
An, though my heart said "Yes!" I bade you go.
The han that marks the cent'ry's run half roun,
And snows of fifty winters sifted down
Since then, an now that same old tinklen tune
Is strivin to turn December into June,
An melt the gathered frosts of age an time
With an old lover's sentermental rhyme.
Lord bless you, John! you'd take me for a mummy
Ef you could see me; yet I ain't no dummy!
I set an knit, an think the old times over—
Old home, old friends, old playmates an old lover,
They all rise up past nearer things an dearer,
For back to'rds childhood mem'ry's sky gits clearer.
But greatgran'mothers can't be gals, I reckon,
No more nor gran'thers beaux, at call an beckon,
Or last year's leaves, all withered, dry an faded,
Can rise in woods the frost has ne'er invaded.
Don't dream, old friend, that winter's ice an snows is
The buddin spring times crocusses an roses,
Or yaller cowslips, brimmed with golden lafter,
Can sprout by frozen brooks, or that, hereafter,
Yourself an me, reversin Nater's fashion,
Shall live again Youth's trustful love an passion.

I don't like poetry, can't never like it;
An ef I had the power I'd up an strike it
Out of existence, for, 'twas only that
Made me refuse my early lover pat,
An turn away dissatisfied an mean;
An now it comes again, a paintin green
Life's brown old stubble, an a callin swallers
An katydids from out the frozen hollers,
An bidden age with love go lightly strayen
Where gout belongs an rheumatiz is playen;

Picterin old gran'ma as a rosy maiden,
Treadin, in virgin coyness, youth's fair aidenn,
An maken bleeve renew, in spite of reason,
The flowin sap, as in the vernal season,
In leafless branches, by the storm winds shaken,
Which all song birds but memory's has forsaken.

Come, John, an see me, jest to learn how nice
That poet nater of yourn has fooled you twice.
We'll talk old times, and how to be forgiven
For all our sins, an jog along to'rds heaven,
Nor think nor dream of youthful Cupid's wingin,
When we should listen for the angels singin,
An be a moven for'ard, sure an steady,
A striven an a prayen to be ready
For layen down each earthly care an burden,
To meet our youth on t'other side of Jordan.
The Bible says there ain't no marryin there,
Nor nothin worl'ly breathes the heavenly air;
An what would happy angels, good an wise,
Think an remark, ef, looken from the skies,
They'd see us weak old fools in marriage given,
As ef to make our honeymoon in heaven?
No, John, we'll soon be as the angels are
Beyon the shinin realms of sun an star.
Till there we meet, I shell continer still
Your bowed an trem'lin friend,

PENINA HILL.

VENEZ ENCORE, DOUCE FRAISE!

Farewell, darling strawberry!
Luscious and sweet,
We part in great sorrow,
Yet hoping to meet
In some balmy future
When summer is fair
And the berry-man learneth
To deal on the square,
Venez encore, douce fraise!

We never grow weary
Of tasting thy lips,
Darling pet, they are sweeter
Than nectars Jove sips.
But we weary, alas!
When our money is gone,
And two berry-man's quarts
Will but measure out one,
Venez encore, douce fraise!

Farewell, darling strawberry!
Since for thy sake
The good wife no longer
Constructs the short-cake;
And the deadly ice cream man
Now fixes his glance
Where the raspberry joins
In the season's gay dance,
Venez encore, douce fraise!

Good-bye, darling strawberry!
Thou 'rt gone like a dream.

No more will we drown thee
In well-watered cream;
No more the church lady,
With pious intent,
Sell thee for a dime,
When thou cost her a cent,
Venez encore, douce fraise!

Farewell, gentle strawberry!
Now, with a tear,
The berry-man fixes each box
For next year!
He puts up the bottom
And shaves off the top,
Then lays it to rest
In the heart of his shop,
Venez encore, douce fraise!

It was good Isaac Walton
Who said in his day
That God, doubtless, could,
Had He sought for a way,
Have created a fruit
More delightful than thee,
"But then, God never did,"
With a smile, added he,
Venez encore, douce fraise!

And we promise ourselves,
As we bid thee good-bye,
That, if we should live,
Like bold Pat, "till we die,"
We'll keep both our tongues
And our palates in tune
For the strawberry chorus
That glorifies June,
Venez encore, douce fraise!

When the strawberry stars
  In the heavens of our youth,
As we look back, appear
  Honeyed globes full of truth,
We shout with regret
  Looking backward for aye
And remembering the sweets
  Of each early June day,
    Venez encore, douce fraise!

TO NELLIE

(Two Weeks Old)

Good morning to Nellie!
  You're welcome, young lady!
This country is large
  And there's lots of room in it;
But life is not long:
  Though when babies begin it
It seems like an age
  Ere they learn to go walking,
Leave crying and puling
  For laughing and talking;
And here, darling Nellie,
  Let uncle remind you,
There's many a rude blast
  And ill wind that will find you;
And many a hard ache,
  Both for heart and for cranium,
Nor is half the world grows
  Either rose or geranium.

There are shadows for young folks,
  And sorrows for old ones;

There are fires for the hot folks,
And frosts for the cold ones,
But, somehow, I think,
Though I can't just explain it,
That life bears a blessing
For each, could he gain it;
But few win the guerdon
Or some never know it
Till it slips from their hands
Like success from a poet;
But still, Nellie dear,
There are valleys where roses
Bloom sweet as the west
When a summer day closes.
God grant, little niece,
That your path may lead through them,
And that all things you do
May be blest as you do them.

So here's a warm welcome
To earth and her mysteries,
Her mountains and rivers,
Her rock-written histories,
Her woods and her fields,
Cities, gardens and meadows,
Her bountiful sunshine,
Her sweet, pensive shadows.

You'll find, little lassie,
Some leisure for dollies,
And things that delight
Baby girls, ere the follies
Of fashion come in
To destroy that illusion
Of child-world that blesses
In boundless profusion.

You'll find much to learn,
And will learn much that better
No doubt, be unknown,
For this life, like a letter,
Will bring you some tidings
To set your eyes streaming,
And some that will put them
To dancing and beaming.
So Nellie, sweet Nellie,
Here's a welcome unflagging!
You're in the world with us,
And the world is a-wagging.

"WHISTLING JOE"

By the border of a woodland,
In a cabin, rude and low,
Dwelt a young lad with his mother,
In the days of long ago:
And that mother was a widow
And her daily joy did flow
From the cheerful, earnest labors
Of the lad called "Whistling Joe;"
As he whistled in the morning
Many a snatch of gleesome tune,
Or at evening hummed a ditty
To the old man in the moon,
Mocking all the merry song birds
That he heard from bush or tree,
From the gusty joy of blackbirds
To the chirp of chickadee.

"Mother, dear, I am so happy
That I've strength to toil for you,
That my spirits will run over,
And I can't be sad nor blue,"

Said the merry little fellow,
And no doubt his words were true,
For next moment rose his whistle
In the tune of "Bonnets Blue;"
Then he echoed back the barking
Of the squirrel on the tree,
Mocked the rollic of the robin
And the thrushes' happy glee,
Set the comic cat-bird laughing
At his own mosaic lay,
At the whistle of the grosbeak
And the cackle of the jay.

"Oh, dear widow!" cried the deacon,
With his face so sad and long,
"That wild boy of yours, I'm certain,
Will be up to something wrong;
So much levity, good woman,
Shows old Satan's influence strong:"
But just then the lad came homeward,
And his mouth was full of song,
And he sang "The day is over,
And its memory I bless,
For I've earned a silver dollar
And I've bought my ma a dress,
Which will make her look so comely,
As she walks to church, I guess,
That she'll feel once more the sunshine
Of her girlish happiness."

Then the widow smiled and answered,
Very pleasantly and low,
"Josy loves me, labors for me,
Soothes my every pain and woe,
And I've not the heart, good Deacon—
He enjoys his racket so—
To forbid the noise and gladness

Of my dear, big-hearted Joe,
As he chirrups with the crickets
At his labor all the day,
And comes happy homeward singing
When the dusk is growing gray;
And the music of his whistle
And his voice's merry play,
Are the sounds that most delight me
As my evening fades away."

Growling surlily, the deacon
Pulled his hat upon his head,
And rejoined, "O, wicked woman,
Be his sins upon thy head!"
Then he strode away so solemn,
Looking wise as any owl
While Joe, toiling in the garden,
Mocked that melancholy fowl,
With "tu whit, tu whit, tu whoo!
I'm the pride of all the wood,
'Tis but little that I do,
But I'm goody, goody, good.
Pretty song birds I devour,
Little chicks I murder, too,
I can't bear the cheerful light,
But I'm wise and good, tu whoo!"

So the days and years ran by them
And the widow's skies were fair,
For the sunshine of Joe's nature
Banished darkness and despair.
Yet, for all his noise and gladness,
Not a thoughtless lad was he,
But he loved his books and papers
And he labored joyfully:
Singing where the flowers were blooming,
Whistling loud behind the plow.

Chattering, as the fragrant clover
He prepared for stack or mow;
Never pining, nor regretting
At his poverty, this boy
Deftly wrought life's earnest purpose
To the melody of joy.

Now that mother knows the silence
That befalleth all below,
And her son, no longer answering
To the name of "Whistling Joe,"
Gathers sons and daughters round him
And proclaims the rule of joy,
Saying to each smiling daughter
And broad-shouldered, lusty boy,
"Love and happiness will flourish
And fair virtue bud and bloom,
Better in the air of gladness
Than in atmospheres of gloom:
Hatred, selfishness and passion
Die when song begins to flow,
And the joy that lightens burdens
In the thankful heart will grow.

"Better whistle at your labor
Than to nourish sordid schemes;
Better wed your thoughts to music
Than to mope through gloomy dreams;
Better worship God in gladness
As you ply your humble toil,
Than split hairs with theologians
Or dig pitfalls in the soil
For a thoughtless brother's downfall;
Better sinless fancy's play
Than the grim ascetic's dogmas;
Better act than merely pray."

Then the old man whistles lightly
As he used to long ago,
And his happy children bless him,
Singing "Long live Whistling Joe."

THE VACATION

He went on a summer vacation,
The first one he ever had known;
He was sixty, had worked like the nation,
Owned merchandise, cattle and corn.
His farms were as broad as a prairie,
His bank account long as a string;
His fortune, that never did vary,
Was always the right sort of thing.

He could grub, he could plow, he could "figger,"
He could "boss" in a bank or a shop;
In short he "could work like a nigger"
At "bizness" or "maken a crop;"
But this bus'ness of taking vacation
It puzzled and worried him so,
It quickened each pulse's vibration
And set his old face in a glow.

He went for four weeks to Lake Gumbo,
Where fisherman's candor was born,
Where black bass are bigger than Jumbo,
And wild deer are thick in the corn;
Where the turkeys are tame as mosquitoes,
And woodcock are plentier than snipe
And easier to gather than vetoes
When blind widows' pensions are ripe.

He bought him a brand-new breech-loader,
He purchased a rod and a reel,
A boat and provisions to load her,

A bait box, a game bag, a creel;
And then he went fishing and gunning,
And waddling and spluttering around,
And sweating and fuming and running,
And wondering where rest would be found.

He shot a tom-tit on a willow,
He caught a small bream by the tail;
At night as he tossed on his pillow,
He dreamed that some debtor would fail,
And he, far away 'neath the larches,
A-fighting mosquito and gnat,
Would never know what stealthy marches
The "other bank fellers" were at.

He rose with the tints of Aurora,
Was ready for work by the dawn;
He was off to the lake in his dory
Before all the starlight was gone;
He fretted and worried his spirit
At lazy men seeking the shade,
Such fellows, he thought, could not merit
The joys that prosperity made.

"They sleep until six in the morning;
They skulk from the ardors of noon;
At every small cloud they take warning,
And go from their fishing too soon.
How can such folks enjoy a vacation?
So idle and listless are they.
As for me, I'll vacate like the nation;
I'm set in my mind it shall pay."

He raced and he chased and he fretted,
And dreamed of dire losses by night,
For three sultry days, each regretted
As so much clean cash gone from sight;
On the fourth morning, peevish and sighing,

He lay with an ague in bed,
When the heat came he thought he was dying;
The quinine it roared in his head.

They laid him down soft on a litter,
They bore him away to the train,
The train whirled him home, but the glitter
Of a month of vacation in vain
Winked, twinkled and dazzled before him
Thereafter, it tempted no more;
But never he ceased to deplore him
The cost of his outfit and store.

He added it several times over
To the sum of each mortgage he took;
More faithful to it than a lover,
He figured it down in a book;
His lifetime's one loss, its one sorrow
That burned his poor soul to the core,
He'd regain it to-day, but to-morrow
He'd sigh to regain it once more.

Thus fifty times over and over
He won back his time and his "tin,"
And still studied hard to discover
New tricks to absorb it again.
The thought of that fearful vacation,—
It haunted and worried him so
That he perished, at last, of vexation,
And died in the wormwood of woe.

His heirs reared above his last slumber
A ten-dollar stone with one lie,—
They could only afford that small number,—
"Of character noble and high,"
Then turned themselves loose on the booty
And quarreled and squabbled like fun
Till the lawyers took all—'twas their duty—
And then the vacation was done.

ON THE TERRACE

We walked upon the terrace high,
And watched the broad St. Lawrence flow,
And saw the great ships come and go:
A tear stood trembling in her eye;

Upon the lash I saw it gleam
And then I said, "No more, no more
Think of the days long gone before,
For they have vanished as a dream!

"I know the hist'ry, old and strange,
Here Cartier came, 'tis Champlain's town,
Here Laval wore his sable gown;
But weep no more, for all must change!

"Though Frenchmen yield and England reign,
Montcalm and Wolfe together lie,
Though brave Montgomery fall hard by,
No patriot blood is shed in vain.

"All things," I said, "work out for good,
And some high purpose lurks beneath
Each passing sorrow's cruel sheath;
Weep not o'er these old tales of blood!"

She looked me squarely in the face
And set my dignity at bay,
Then laughed until it fled away,
And said she thought 'twas "out of place,

"This stealing from the guide-book's lore,"
And cried, "A dear old pump like you

Is dull enough, heaven knows, for two,
So, prithee, lecture me no more!

" As for that tear so round and ripe,
That on your owlish fancy wrought,
It came from one big whiff I caught
From yon confounded Frenchman's pipe."

AN AUTUMN REVERIE

I

ALL purple and gold are the leaves on the trees,
And the corn blades are withered and brown,
While the elderly farmer is taking his ease,
And driving each day into town,
Where the oily-tongued man of insurance he'll meet
And hear his sweet tones with a smile,
And think that his heart is as free from deceit
As his lips are unlettered in guile.

II

The lightning-rod peddler is out on the road
And the woodpecker pecks on the limb,
While the little snake struggles to swallow the toad
And the bullfrog is taking a swim;
The pumpkins are ripe on the frost-bitten vine
And the walnuts are falling amain,
While the country boy sings to the musical swine
As they munch the new corn in the lane.

III

The cunning opossum holds on by his tail,
When old Sambo is shaking the bush;

The screech-owl repeateth her shivering wail
And the Hoosier feeds well on his mush;
The men of "cheap clodings" are telling their lies,
For the winter will shortly be here;
And the glorious old bummer perceives, with surprise,
That it frosts when the evenings are clear.

IV

The tramp he goes tramping and begging for bread,
While his appetite groweth apace;
Swell suppers still end with a swell in the head
And the belle putteth flour on her face;
The raccoon he racks through the fields of ripe corn
And the watch dog he chases the sheep,
While chanticleer crows in the cool, frosty morn
To wake the bold granger from sleep.

V

The aster still waves its proud head on the hill,
As the golden-rod fades by the path;
The miller he mills all the day in the mill
And at night he counts up what he hath;
While the editor edits his "patent insides"
And the lawyer lives fat on—his lip,
The tippler is up while the night still abides,
For a generous, inspiriting nip.

VI

There's a deep, deadly light in the book agent's eye
As she raps on the Methodist's door,
Where the "Drunkard Reformed" has just bidden good-bye,

To be back when his lecture is o'er;
But the newspaper wit, with his hand on his brow,
Sitteth sad and encumbered and blue,
For spring-poet gags are unseasonable now
And the mother-in-law chestnut won't do.

VII

Oh, autumn, dear autumn! we love thy sweet reign;
Thy 'taters, thy cider, thy cheese;
Thy spare-ribs and sausage are welcome again,
But never thy cough and thy sneeze;
Oh! bring us, dear autumn, thy rich pumpkin pies,
With hickory nuts, hominy and squash,
And solace our pockets and gladden our eyes
With the gay, golden lustre of cash!

A BEAR-I-TONE

"Whoop-la, whoop, tra, la, la, la!"
Two dirty Polanders sing and shout,
And the Cinnamon bear lifts up his paw
And on his hind legs capers about;
And the small boy's mouth is open wide,
As if to invite the bear inside.

"Whoop-la, whoop!" in the melting snow
And slush of the street they splash around;
And the crowd that follows them to and fro,
Rattles the coppers, with tinkling sound,
Into the Polander's lousy hat,
And Bruin boweth his thanks for that.

"Whoop-la, whoop!" spring lingers late,
And bears eat greatly, so I've been told;
And keepers, to vanquish their hungry fate,
Put Bruin at work in the storm and cold,
And he growls at the weather, but who should care
For the sullen whims of a snarling bear?

"Whoop-la, whoop!" and the bulky brute
Plays soldier so awkwardly, I declare,
He acts like a very raw recruit,
And dozens of men I've seen play bear,
Are better up to their parts than he,
Or any four-legged bear can be.

SOLOMON'S EPISTLE TO JOHN

Well, Johnny, my boy! How's your debts?—
'Tis Christmas, you know what that means
To a chap who don't pay as he gets:—
Mine are bad enough; Governor bets
I'll have suits in a week by the teens.

But Christmas is Christmas, you know,
And I'll not be banged out of my fun,
Though constables stand in a row
Down the streets and the roads where I go,
Each armed with subpœna and dun.

I'm eager to see how it goes—
The ball at the Eagle, you guess—
That's it, and the dance at Will Crow's
And the sleighride to Hill's, if it snows,
With the girl in the striped silk dress.

Last year,—you remember it all,—
I drove to a banquet at Clyde:
What happened I cannot recall,
But think that I grew very tall,
Then wilted and shriveled and died.

When I woke, with an ache in the head;
Myself and a pig or two more
Were playing "dead beat" in a shed,
Beneath the remains of a sled,
Which sled was my sleigh day before.

Well, Johnny, I owe for that sleigh,
And the constable's taken my watch,
But it's not worth five dollars to-day,
'Though forty, I think, is to pay
And the note with the squire,—just my notch!

You see I've been bumming around,
And having a great deal of fun:
Have you seen my imported fox hound?
He's the swiftest, so cheap,—why, confound
It all! here in my vest is the dun.

"Only thirty-five dollars," Jim writes,
For such a most marvelous dog;"
And then all his troubles recites,
And gives me the neatest "invites"
To settle for him and my grog.

You see Jimmy keeps a saloon
In Jacktown, on Michigan road,
Sells whisky, breeds puppies, buys coon
And all kinds of fur;—well, in June
'Twas him sixty dollars I owed.

That included the drams and the pup,
And the fiddle Tom played at the fair;

Now, I think, there's my tailor bill up,
But I'll give the goose-driver a sup
And get him to wait on that 'ere.

It's only a trifle, you see;
And tailors their money don't need;
Two broadcloths at sixty—his fee
Three tweeds, forty each, priced by me,
And then I owe Smith for my feed.

If people would only be still
And remember fun's fun at the worst,
And, no matter who pays the bill,
Each thirsty dog wishes his fill,
So many fine chaps wouldn't burst.

For, argue whatever you may,
When a fellow is running down stairs,
Every gamin's got something to say
While he kicks you his own proper way,
Till you're sadly in need of repairs.

I'll remark, too, their general remarks
Are not always kind nor polite:
Friends indeed are these jolly fine larks
While your money goes upward like sparks
From the chimney a cold winter night.

But when empty pockets are left,
They fly away croaking like crows:
While they curse you, you feel quite bereft
And learn that your fun's had a heft
You had never been led to suppose.

Great Cæsar! I'd never a thought,
When I sat down to write, Johnny dear!
I'd be talking so near like I ought
About all this bothering for nought,
Carousals and whisky and beer;

And paying the bills for the chaps,
  And getting yourself into scrapes,
Till your money is all gone to scraps,
Credit ruined, and at your mishaps
  The bummers are grinning like apes.

MUD-PIE DAYS

CHILDREN together we romp and play,
  When the morn is fresh and fair,
Then grow estranged in the broad'ning day
  By envy, ambition, care;
But yearn, at heart, through the noontide blaze,
For the sinless joys of our mud-pie days.

O dimply doll, in the linsey dress!
  What princess could equal you
To the toddling lovers you used to bless
  Or to flout, as the grown girls do,
When you were queen and ruler of plays,
In the guileless world of our mud-pie days?

To gallop the door-yard blooms among
  On a brave stick-horse, by a lady's side;
To chase the speckled hen's downy young
  And to ford the well-drain's raging tide,
Then scurry back in a lively chase,—
What joyful times were our mud-pie days!

The future judge and the future clown,
  The future lady and lady's maid
Were equals then, and the gaping town,
  That basked in sunshine, dozed in shade,
To the clown and maid ascribed most praise,
In the happy reign of our mud-pie days.

The things that the wise men ne'er foresee
  Are the things that happen, and so I say
That the village "Toby" is apt to be
  The country's pride in a future day;
And then the village herself will praise
Because she gave him his mud-pie days.

THE FATE OF THE PENNY

"PLEASE, mama's sick an' we got no bread,
  An' won't you a penny please to give?"
"O, yes, my fellow," the good man said,
  "Your poor sick mama must rise and live,
So here's your penny, go quick and buy
A—stick of candy, or she may die."

A smile shone round through the dirt and grime
  On the urchin's face, as he muttered low,
"Thanks mister! but couldn't you make it a
    dime?
  For candy is mighty dear, you know,
Not candy, 'twas bread, I meant to say!"
But the good man was half a square away.

That urchin stands there studying long,
  Deciding at last on chocolate drops,
And knowing full well where weights are strong
  And clerks are careless, in there he hops.
Three minutes later another streak
Was seen in the dirt on either cheek.

OULD PADDY FITZMORRIS

Ould Paddy FitzMorris
Is eighty, they say,
But he still loves to joke
With the lads and be gay.
Paddy totters a bit,
As he walks, but his joy
It seems to flow out
From the heart of a boy.
Long flourish the Emerald Isle in the sea,
Its shillalah, its shamrock, its wake and its sphree,
And Ould Paddy FitzMorris, O, long live he!

Ould Paddy FitzMorris,
Away in the West,
Far, far from green Erin,
Will sink to his rest;
But he who is happy
And gay at four-score,
Will scarcely repine
When his journey is o'er.
Then long live Ould Ireland, the gem of the sea,
With its harp and its memories of old minstrelsy,
And Paddy FitzMorris, O, long flourish he.

Ould Paddy FitzMorris
Has now laid away
The spade and the shovel—
His friends many a day—
And when the sun shines,
And the weather is fair,
He walks up the street
And the lads meet him there;

And with jest and with laugh set the air ringing
free
To broad jokes of Ould Ireland, its wake and its
sphree,
And they end with this toast, to which all will
agree:
"Ould Paddy FitzMorris, O, long flourish he."
1882

PATRICK AT THE CAPITOL

Aloft, in flowing garb, she stood,
Her Indian head-gear waving high—
Fair Freedom's Goddess brave and good;
But Patrick Shane was full of "rye"
And bowed a livelier head then hers
Against the fluted column's face,
Where pass the thousand worshipers
Of freedom, elegance and grace.

There, on the eastern portico
Of the great Capitol, he slept;
The multitudes, with ceaseless flow,
Through halls and corridors, on swept
Beneath the mighty dome and saw
The grand, historic paintings there,
Or gazed, with ill-dissembled awe,
Upon the statues. Free of care,
Our Patrick Shane still leaned his head
Against the lofty pillar's face,
And, to his credit be it said,
Was noiseless as the hidden ace
That slippeth from the player's sleeve
To make the bold trump-holder grieve.

I see you shake your solemn head,
And hear you mutter, "What a shame!"
"Drunk, where the Nation's light is shed!
Drunk, in the very ark of fame,
At Freedom's holiest shrine!" But hold!
You may be wrong, and so may I;
We should not be so over-bold;
Perhaps his weakness is not "rye,"
Nor even good corn whisky, old;
He may have been, I will not say
He was, on Freedom's nectar "tight,"
Or "loose," or "drunk," or what you will;
But there, on Capitolian hill,
At the great portal facing east
He sat, from care awhile released,
And leaned, in true Bacchantian grace,
His Celtic head against the face
Of fluted column holding high
The lofty portico, and knew
Such sleep as only "corn" or "rye"
Or Freedom brings its votaries to.

I gazed upon his sandy hair
And nose in blossom, and I said,
"O Freedom! thou art great and fair,
And ever to be worship-ed!
Here, in thy palace, thy strong-hold,
Temple and tower, thy humble child
May come, and, careless of the cold
That nips him sharply, "draw it mild"
From jug or bottle or the free,
Grand inspiration, fresh from thee,
Until he sits and bends his trunk,
And bows his head and knows the bliss
Of being most supremely drunk
In such a hallowed place as this.

THE CAMP MEETING

NEGRO DIALECT

I

Heah dat ole Camp meetin hawn!
Blowen fah ercross de cawn,
Foh de Augus' sun am hot
An de chicken 's in de pot
An de dumplin an de tater 'll soon be dah;
So, Penina, stir de fiah
While de hymn 's a gettin highah,
Foh de preachah an de saint
Dey mus' eat, er dey mus' faint,
W'en dey tackle de ole debble in dis wah.

II

Ha'k, O, sinnah! heah dem shout!
See dem monahs comen out;
Heah dem preachas preachen loud;
See dem eldahs looken proud
As de glory ob de cross am magnified!
O! we'll climb de golden stair
An de pinnacles ob air!
We will be de crownen gems
In dem New Jerusalems
W'en de chariot 's done an' swung us twudder side.

III

Oh! dis ole camp meetin kin'
Ob religum suit de min'
Dats not biggoty noh vain,
Noh contented to ermain

In de wo'mwood an' de spicknahd an' de gall;
An de step dem shepahds keep
Is so natchel foh de sheep,
Dat de sheep dey trot so fas'
Dat de shepahds dey would pass
Ef de lambs dey didn't slip sometimes an fall.

IV

Heah de sistahs sing an shout
Ez de 'Zortahs go erbout
Wid de wahnin an de hope
Dat'll break de debble's rope
Dat he bin' de sinnah wid so ha'd an fas';
Foh it snap ez quick ez sin
W'en he lets religum in,
An de joy dem postles fin'
Is de hallelujah kin',
An de glory ob de story always las'.

V

On dis ole camp meetin groun'
Listnen to de gospel soun,
W'en de preacha shed his coat
An de sweat begin to float
An de aamens an de glorys beat de air;
Den de joy come swif' an strong;
Den de chariot move erlong;
Den de sinnah 'gin to shake;
Den de debble 'gin to quake;
An de sky ben downa'd to de richus' prayer.

VI

See de ole camp meetin grace
Shinen in each cullad face,
As dey tramp de tremlin-groun'
In de ole-time walk-aroun';

O! de white folks has now powah such as dey!
W'en de walls ob Jericho
Gets a rocken to an fro,
An de hallelujahs ring
To de glory ob de King,
Hits de time to be upon de hebenly way.

VII

Ha'k, to dat camp meetin' hawn
How it sings ercross de cawn;
How it hollahs come up highah
Fum de brumstone an de fiah!
How it wauns yer dat de day am passen by!
Dat yo' po', sick, shiv'en soul
Soon mus feel de Johdan roll,
An yo' needin by yo' side
One to lead yo' fru de tide,
An pint out de glory places in de sky.

VIII

So, Penina, stir de fiah,
Foh dem preachas soon'll tiah;
Let de pot pie be well done
'Fo' de turnen ob de Sun
Pas de noon spot where dem shadders gets de leas';
Foh dis glorus 'ligus fight
Shahps de preacha's appetite,
An de sistahs, bruvvahs too
Mus' dey mohtal strenf ernew
Wid de pot pie an de tater ob de feas'.

CÆSAR'S STORY

NEGRO DIALECT

W'EN I cum fum Alabama,
In de eighteen sixty-fo,
I were feelin' bout as gawjus
As de big clown in de show.
Niggahs den were outen mahket
An a steppin mighty proud,
An a praisen Abum Linkum
Berry 'diciously an loud:

An dis darkey were a totin
Ob a papah all erbout
Sayin dat, as fur de sarvin
Uncle Sam, his job were out;
Dats wut made me feel de bestest
Fur yer dassent ebber say
Dat hits any so't of pleashu
To be shot at day by day.

W'en I thought of comin nothwad
Dey were one thing in de paf,
Hits a berry common 'went, too,
An' 'll maybe make you laugh;—
'Twere a yallah gal in Huntsville
Wid er baby in comman'—
W'y it 'zembled me so 'zackly
I could nebber un'erstan'.

But I 'cluded dat to stay dar
Were not any good foh me,

An I pined to see dis no'th lan'
Dat had don an' made us free;
So I said fahwell to Lucy
An de little yallah chile;
An Miss Lucy—I could heah her
Cryin no'th'ad many a mile.

Way ercross de 'Hio ribber
Seemed es uf I still could heah
Lucy cryin to dat baby
An a wailin' foh her deah;
Den my haht were like to bustin,
An my eyes were mighty red;
Fink it mus' hev been de agah
Dat were howlin in my head.

Way out heah in Injeana
Dahkey gals is mighty fine,
An I soon fo'got Miss Lucy
An dat little babe of mine,
'Gwine roun to de culla'd picnics,
Dancin to de fiddle's squall
Wid de gals of 'Catah county,
Sweet as pictahs on de wall.

Bimeby,—dunno how it happened,—
But I gaged my haht an han
To de little gipsy Susan,
Proudest niggah in de lan.
Susy's pa hed eighty akahs,
An a cabin made o' plank,
An erbout five hunna'd dollahs
Down to Greensbu'g in de bank.

Susy cloved herself in satin
Dat look like de buttahflies,
Or dat paht of peacock feathahs

Dat exembles hosses' eyes;
An she talked de school-house langwidge,
And her eyes were like de stahs
W'en my fingahs on de banjo
Flung down all dem music bahs.

O! she lubbed me mighty sahtin,
An I lubbed her papa's lan,
An er fine close an er langwidge
An de jewels on er han;
But no soonah was I gaged, sah,
Dan de worl went swimmin roun,
An I hea'd a gal an baby
Cryin way down in de groun.

Way down cross de 'Hio ribber,
Fru Kentuck an Tennessee
To de Huntsville, Alabama,
Jes a minit toted me;
'Twel I thought dat I were dyen
In my good ole muzzers bed,
An Miss Lucy, wid de baby,
Were a weepin' at my head.

Dunno how it all compoted
Wid de awdinary way
Dat dis typho-be-malaria—
Wat you call 'im—do to-day;
But foh weeks an weeks togeddah
I lay mo'nen all de w'ile
Bout Miss Lucy down to Huntsville
An de little yallah chile.

Atter w'ile I hea'd de doctah
Say hits not use come no mo',
Bettah tell im dat his baggage
Now done checked fo' tuddah sho;

Den I fell erway to dreamin,
An I seed an angel stan'
By de bedside dat were holden
Nuzzer angel by de han'.

Fust a golden mist were bout 'em,
But it brightened slow erway
'Twel Miss Lucy an de baby
Stood dah plainer dan de day;
Den my ahms flung off de kivah
An rech out ter clasp de air;
Lan o' libbin! halleluyah!
Lucy an de chile were dere!

Den I jumped up straight an shouted,
An de angels 'gan ter sing,
W'ile I danced an slapped de jubah
An I cut de pigeon wing;
Nebah thought erbout my gahments,
But jes danced dah 'twel I fell
In my Lucy's lovin ahmses,
An de chile sot up a yell.

Long, dey say twere many weekses
Atter dat befo' I foun'
Dat I were not in my coffin
Free or fo' feet in de groun';
But Miss Lucy an de baby
Nuss me up so pow'ful fine
Dat de fevah saw twere gin'im
An recluded to decline

Any fuddah operwations
On dis dahkies cawpul frame;
So de preacha' come an jined me
In de mastah's holy name

To de yallah gal fum Huntsville
An de little culla'd chile;
Den Miss Susy cut our 'quaintance,
But we's still erbove de sile.

An er lot o' happier dahkies
You'll not fine in any day
Dan dem little niggaroonses
Dat erbout our cabin play.
Heah de moral ob dis story!
Tis dat leaben lub for wealf
Are not good fo' de digestion,
An am powful on de healf.

THE LESSON AND OTHER POEMS

The poems in the following pages, with a few others, were printed privately in a little volume bearing the above title, in the year 1871. The volume was dedicated as follows:

TO MY FATHER AND MOTHER,

Who, I trust, after years of separation, are reunited in the better life, and whom, in kindly thought or hallowed memories, I cannot separate, nor recall the compassionate love of the one, without renewing the long suffering faith and hope of the other; this little book is affectionately dedicated by their son and debtor, B. S. P.

PRELUDE

You asked me, dear friends, in the fair month of roses,
To write you some verses in elegant rhyme,
All radiant with summer and cheerful with posies,
And delightfully sweet in their musical chime;
And I made for answer, if you will remember,
That, though summer glorified all with its blushes,
Still deep in my soul was the grief of November,
And my sorrowful notes would not chord with
the thrushes;
But said, I would gather the old songs together,—
The rude rhymes I chattered in other sad days,
The notes that went tripping in all sorts of weather,
And sought only your never critical praise.
So here I present them, unpruned, the old ditties
Of sorrow and love, and the lyrical notions
Of freedom and labor; not fit for the cities,
But just the rude offspring of country emotions;
So take them, dear friends; if they give any pleasure,
Or charm you one moment away from your pain,
My toil is repaid in that bountiful measure
That comes when we know that we've toiled not in
vain.

THE LESSON

I

A TINY rill and a little child,
In a fair and lovely land,
And the child has heaped in the water's edge
A pile of the yellow sand;
Then tries to hold the current back
With a little dimpled hand.

But sunken like a rose leaf wet
With nectar sweet as dew,
The little hand beneath the tide
Transparent meets the view,
And, with the mien of a thoughtful man
Who sees a wonder new,

He queries "why they will not stop—
These drops that laugh and sigh—
I cannot hold them in my grasp;
They still go rushing by;
They will not pause, they cannot rest;
Do the waters never die?

"They murmur, murmur, as they go;
I know not what they say;
But yet I think they sing to me
Of a region far away,
Of cities, and domes, and palaces,
A river and a bay.

"Sometimes I hear my robin's voice,
And then my sparrow's song;
And now the blue-jay's rollic call,

As the water skips along;
And now my drowned hand is numb,
And the current swift and strong.

"I wonder if the waters think,
And know the things they say,
And why they ripple, and run, and rush,
And journey night and day;
And if they know I watch them here,
As they tinkle on their way?

"They whisper, whisper the prettiest things!
I wish I knew their talk:
It's like the wind when the maple leaves
Come pattering on the walk;
It's like the rain when it strikes the pads
On my tiger-lily stalk.

"It's like—I know not what it's like—
But it seems to speak to me
Of gliding keels, and sailing ships,
And things that are to be
When I am grown a man, and dwell
Beside the restless sea.

"And then it sings, 'I grow, I grow;
I'm here but a little rill;
In the orchard I'm fully a yard across;
In the meadow wider still;
And the children float their little boats
On my breast at William's mill.'

"I hear no more the robin's song,
Nor the sparrow's treble call;
But a mighty river's rush and roar,
Where shadows of mountains fall;
And surges of a wonderful sea,
Whose cliffs are white and tall.

"From lesson and play I sail away
And dream what I shall know
When, like the rill, I move along,
And better and larger grow;
And when I think of this happy day
It will seem so long ago!"

So long ago! So long ago!
But the ne'er forgotten rill
And the questions that haunt the little boy,
Who is sitting here so still,
May haunt forever, may shape his thoughts,
May inspire him, soul and will.

II

A little rill and a wrinkled man,
In a fair and lovely land,
And he has heaped in the water's edge
A pile of the yellow sand;
Then tries to dam the tiny beck,
With a weak and trembling hand.

Ah! thirty summers have past, he sighs,
In a treble, shrill and slow,
Since I returned from over the sea,
In life's meridian glow,
In the strength of my fifty stalwart years
To smile on the brooklet's flow.

And then I thought of a little child
Who, forty years before,
Beheld a vision of wealth and strength,
And wisdom, and love and more—
Aye, more than I had ever borne
From the great world's mighty store.

It seemed to me but yesterday—
  It seems just so this noon—
That, full of childish hope, I heard
  This brooklet's lightsome rune,
And, from the slender music, learned
  Life's most exultant tune.

But I was only fifty then;
  My thoughts were hot and wild
With finance, politics, and trade;
  For love was long exiled
From active thought to silent life;
  I soon forgot the child.

But all the toil is over now;
  My visions long withdrawn;
And so I sit beside the rill,
  And think upon the gone,
And feel myself a little child,
  That, in the happy dawn,

Has wakened to the robin's song,
  And to the sparrow's call,
And sought the brooklet's yielding verge
  To hear the measures fall
The tinkling, whispering waters make
  Above the pebbles small.

A child again! yet not a child,
  And the brooklet seems to sigh
For the lad it knew, when his years were few
  And his heart was beating high,
For time flows on, as the brook flows on,
  And boy and man must die.

And so beside the rill I sit
  And feel the wonder still,

For boyish thoughts and childish dreams
  Inspire me, soul and will,
And some are memories and some
  The future must fulfill.

No more to passion love belongs,
  Nor hope to golden gains;
The under-current of my years
  Fills all my life, as rains,
In winter, fill the dwindled brooks,
  And wake their old refrains.

The chords of love's immortal lyre
  Are trembling on the keys.
For me, at last, a gentle hand
  Shall wake their melodies—
Her hand that waits me where the stream
  Shall meet th' eternal seas.

I dream of domes and palaces
  Not reared by mortal hands;
Of cities by the summer sea,
  And far, unnumbered lands
That roll their wealth, in music, down
  A million shining strands.

I greet the friends of other days,
  Where endless joys distill
As freely as the dews that fall
  Along this laughing rill,
And yet, O child! thy hopes inspire,
  Inspire me, soul and will.

III

A new grave in the church-yard now;
  The rill flows on and on;

Young hearts are beating on its verge;
  Love waketh with the dawn;
But never a robin nor sparrow sings
  A note about the gone.

Lives flow, like waters to the sea,
  With freights of good or ill;
And ever and ever the dear Lord holds
  The strings of their being still,
And leads them down their devious ways
  His purpose to fulfill.

One cries, "O sinner!" and one, "O saint!"
  And the river's banks recede;
One grasps at the pebbles on the marge,
  In the depth of his golden greed;
One chases a bubble, and one but floats,
  As the rushing waves proceed.

But deep in the lives that rush and toss,
  And jostle and swirl and flow,
Are childhood's visions and hopes and prayers,
  And the loves of long ago,
To shrive the soul in its agony,
  And to bless extremest woe.

And often the pallet of rags and straw,
  And the rafters, brown and bare,
Are seen by age through the blissful lens
  Of youth, long fresh and fair,
Till they are sweet, like the summer skies;
  And soft, like the summer air.

The prison wall and the scaffold plank
  In memory cease to be;
But, children again, the convicts stand
  On the brink of the "death-cold sea;"

"For except as little children ye come,
Ye cannot come to me."

Be rich, or poor, or high, or low;
Whenever the race is run,
God only knows His erring child
As a father his erring son;
And so it is very sweet to say,
"Dear Lord! Thy will be done."

INDIAN GRAVES

All along the winding river,
And adown the shady glen,
On the hill, and in the valley,
Are the graves of dusky men.

We are garrulous intruders
On the sacred burying grounds
Of the Manitou's red children,
And the builders of the mounds.

Here the powah and the sachem,
Here the warrior and the maid,
Sleeping in the dust we tread on,
In the forests we invade,

Rest as calmly and as sweetly
As the mummied kings of old,
Where Cyrene's marble city
Guards their consecrated mold.

Through the woodland, through the meadow,
As in silence oft I walk,
Whispering on the passing breezes
Fancy hears the red man's talk,

Muttering low and very sweetly
Of the good Great Spirit's love,
That descends like dews of evening
On his children, from above.

Still repeating from the prophets
And the sachems gray and old,
Stories of the southwest Aidenn,
Curtained all around with gold,

Where the good and great Sowanna
Calleth all his children home,
Through the hunting grounds eternal
Free as summer winds to roam,

Singing wildest songs of wailing
For the dead upon their way
On the four days' journey homeward
To the realms of light and day;

Chanting soft and gentle measures,
Lays of hope and songs of love,—
Now like shout of laughing waters,
Now like cooing of the dove.

Then anon his feet make echo
To the war song's fiendish howl,
And revenge upon his features
Sets the pandemonian scowl.

See! again the smoke is curling,
From the friendly calumet,
And the club of war is buried,
And the star of slaughter set.

But, alas! imagination,
Ever weaving dream on dream,
Soon forgets the buried red men
For some more congenial theme.

But, although their race is ended,
And forever, over here,
Let their virtues be remembered,
While we fervently revere

All their ancient burial places,—
Hill and valley, plain and glen,
Honor every sacred relic
Of that fading race of men.

Gitche Manitou has called them
From the chase and war path here,
To the mystic land of spirits
In some undiscovered sphere.

In the land of light and glory
That no sachem's eye hath seen,
Where the rivers flow forever,
And the woods are always green,

Where the winter sun, descending,
Burns the southwest sky to flame,
Shall the Indian race be gathered
In the great Sowanna's name.

1856

THE WIDOW'S STORY

'Twas Christmas when the widow came, as many
a time before,
To find the heartless world shut out beyond the
deacon's door,
And there, amidst the warmth and glow, to lay
her trembling heart,
All bruised and broken, open to the good man's
healing art.

For he had ears to hear the cry of souls that suffer pain,
And yearning sorrow never sought his sympathy in vain:
His words were few, his counsels wise, his faith and hope sincere,
And so the mourning woman spake while stifling many a tear:

"They tell me a Christian woman, like I profess to be,
Must drown the voice of her sorrow and make her heart be still,
And if her children will leave the Lord for naughty ways, then she
Must cut them off forever, as heirs to endless ill.
And the elder came and scolded me because, as you must know,
I went to see my daughter Jane, in a den of vice and woe,
And said it was unseemly in a Christian woman like me,
To enter in at the threshold of a den of infamy;
That natural love should all give way before the love of the Lord,
And if our children are vile and mean that they are more abhorred
By the dear God above us, and by us should also be,
Than heathen in their filth and crime, in lands beyond the sea;
And then he talked of Jane, and said that I had trained her well,
But often the good Lord tries our faith with the very imps from hell,

Put into the forms of our children; and if we love them still,
As they go in sinful ways, it shows that our carnal will
Is not subdued as it should be, and brought in sweet accord
With the will of the church that worketh the perfect will of the Lord;
And so I sat and listened, till my heart was like to burst,
And my soul within me was yearning with a fiery, burning thirst
That would not be abated nor satisfied at all,
Till I held Jane up in the arms of prayer once more, to the Lord of all;
And when I had finished praying, I cannot tell you why,
It seemed like a peace was round me, from the very courts on high;
And then I sat and wondered what James would say and do,
If he could come back in health again, as he left me in sixty-two;
For you know he fell at Richmond, a fortnight after he left.
There, on the cupboard, you see his cap, that a rebel saber cleft,—
What would he say, should I tell him that Henry and Jo were dead?
(Henry died in the Libby, and Josy was shot through the head
When our boys met Hood at Franklin,—you well remember the time;)
And how Jane, our only daughter, was led to a life of crime,
By a high born wretch, who won her, destroyed her and went his way

To meet the smiles of the ladies and bask in the
cheerful day
Of many a social circle of wealth and high degree,
That would close its doors in horror against my
girl and me;
What would he say, should I tell him how the
elders, wise and nice,
Bade me drive Jane from under my roof, for I
must not sanction vice,
Nor evil in any shape at all, if I would a Christian
be;
And so my injured and weeping girl was driven
away from me;
Away from me, dear Lord, away, where could
the poor girl go,
To find a heart in sympathy with all her wrongs
and woe?
Would the pious take her in? Ah no! for even
her slightest touch
Would soil the holy garments of the righteous
over much.
Society, so nice without, so rotten and base within,
Held up its hands in horror at such a child of sin;
And the only place in all the world that was open
to her, you see,
With a welcome that did not question, was a den
of infamy,
Where fallen women gather to ply their evil
trade,
And receive the smiles of lofty men, where none
do make afraid,
Who would not dare with honest hands in the
light of open day,
To meet their soiling touch or point their lives to
a better way.
Well, thus I questioned myself alone, for an hour
or so and then

I remembered that James, although he was always
the best of men,
And I had often persuaded him to join the church
and stand,
A candidate elected for a home in Canaan's land,
Would ever turn away, and smile, and say with a
friendly sigh,
'My dear, you'll find that the better road lies
another way, by and by,
For they theorize and maunder, to make their own
heaven sure,
But they'd shut the doors of paradise in the face
of the struggling poor;
And the weary, heavy laden with burdens of care
and sin,
Can find in their priestly language no call to enter
in.
The touch of their jeweled fingers and sweep of
their silken skirts,
Are not to be soiled by mechanics, nor the women
who make their shirts;
They talked of the Lord in the manger, and
preach of him on the cross,
But they'd melt down that calf of Aaron's, and
quarrel over the dross;
And that woman of Samaria would arouse their
saintly spleen,
And they'd turn up their perfect noses at Mary
Magdalene,' "—
"Now hold!" responded the good man, "remem-
ber 'tis Christmas day,
And we should lay all our bitter thoughts and
memories away.
The saints, you tell of, widow, are the leaders,
who blindly guess
That the church of Christ is builded to the model
of selfishness,

Your James was right, I grant it, and yet he was
wrong, I see,
That he aimed a blow at the Christian, which
should fall on bigotry;
Go seek your sorrowing daughter, and make her
pure again,
And heaven will guard you safely from the puny
wrath of men."

RHYME OF THE WITHERED LEAVES

I

Gold and scarlet, dry and brown,
Ripened leaves are quivering down;
See! the ground is covered o'er
With a many-colored store;
All the paths along the wood,
All the forest solitude—
Every dear, sequestered nook,
Where I read my summer book,
Where the vernal violet
In its modest fringe was set,
And the robin sang of love,
From the greening boughs above,
Are with fallen glories spread;
Crowns from many a kingly head,
Wreaths from many a noble brow
Lie amid these ruins now.

II

Every gust that hurries by
Whirls the withered leaves on high,
And they sweep along the ground

With a mournful, rustling sound,
Till the hillsides interpose,
Where they heap in deep long rows

III

O! it is a pleasure sweet,
Where our hills and valleys meet
To recline amid the leaves
On these Indian Summer eves,
Watching all the gates of day,
Closing on the lurid way
Of the Sun, who wraps a shroud,
Made of gold and amber cloud,
Round his godlike form, and goes
Proudly to his night's repose.

IV

All the springs of being move
To the finest notes of love,
Blending with the sorrowing air
Like echoes from a distant prayer,
So soft, unsyllabled, and low,
We weep, yet feel no cause for woe.

V

All tenderer feelings grow intense
And banish all of groveling sense;
The past, re-wrought, appears again,
And, with the spirit's piercing ken,
We see from out these mortal shells,
The brimming tide of soul that swells,
Expanding, till its flow must be
As boundless as infinity;
Our future seems to reach and blend

With being that shall never end;
The loved, the lost, the mourned and true,
Each form, each face, the same, we knew
Them long ago, and each delight
And hope that set in rayless night,—
All sweet impressions, gentle words,
E'en shout of brooks and song of birds
Return to sadden or to cheer,
To wake the smile, evoke the tear,
Then pass, to blend with that broad sea
Of life, that flows eternally.

CLARIBELL

Claribell!
Through the morning calm and sweet
Comes the tramp of little feet,
Pattering at the open door,
Tinkering on the naked floor,
Where the merry sunbeams fell
Long ago, dear Claribell.

Claribell!
Now the robin and the jay
Chatter where the branches sway
O'er the pathway, down the walk,
Hallowed by thy pleasant talk;
By thy talk and by thy song,
When the summer days were long;
And the tangled ivies meet,
Meet and blossom where thy feet
In our pleasant journeys fell,
Little darling Claribell.

Claribell!
Not the glory of the morn,
Glimmering through the miles of corn;

Not the polyphonian notes,
Fluting from the feathered throats;
Not a thousand happy hours
Nursed by summer in her flowers;
Nor the terraces of light
Fading from the path of night;
Sweet emotions, soft desires,
Love, with all her blissful fires,
Shall renew thee, as of old;
For thy little feet are mold,
And the summer breezes swell
O'er thy slumber, Claribell.

Claribell!
We have wandered far and long
Since we heard thy morning song;
We have tarried long and late,
Watching, where the sunbeams wait,
For thy shadow, that no more
Glides along the cottage floor.
What are half a score of years,
Months of agony and tears,
Days of darkness and distress,
Fleeting hours of happiness?
Through them all we raise the cry,
"Come from out the fields of sky,
From the silent realms of space,
Dimpled chin and sunny face,
Eyes with laughter brimming o'er,
Shine upon us here once more;
Here once more our pleasures swell,
Dearest angel, Claribell."

Claribell!
Never more thy form we see,
Clothed with our mortality,
Yet we know thee very well,

Like some happy miracle,
Wrought by unseen hands to bless
Even paths of wretchedness;
Yet thy presence, pure and sweet,
Gliding on with noiseless feet,
Hovering viewless in the air,
Meets and greets us everywhere;—
Not beyond some golden door,
Hidden from us evermore,
Not upon some far-off strand,
Beckoning with a shadow hand,
Like the wise and great who die,
Ghostly templars of the sky,
Trumpeting from awful heights,
Warning through the solemn nights;—
But about us pure and calm,
Constant blessing, constant psalm,
Growing with the growing years,
Heightening joy and sweetening tears;
So we love our darling well
Lost, but present Claribell!

MY ROBIN

Out in the cheery breath of morn,
  Up from the meadow winging,
Before the day is fairly born,
  I hear my robin singing.

Last year, before the maple's crown
  Received its purple glory,
This jolly fellow set the town
  A-ringing with his story.

And now, before the snow is gone,
  His merry pipings greet us,

The soul of Spring's impending dawn,
In music come to meet us.

O! robin in the cherry tree,
With heart so brave, yet tender,
Why singest thou so merrily,
In the morning's ruddy splendor?

Thou wakest thoughts of other years,
When being's sunny fountain
Seemed flowing onward through the spheres,
From some celestial mountain.

Old strains of music, wild and sweet,
Are in thy notes returning;
Old greetings, such as children meet,
Set all my spirit yearning,

And dreaming of the pleasant wood,
Where maple boughs were swinging,
And, children of the neighborhood,
We mocked the robin's singing.

The curly heads are by my side,
I hear the children's laughter,
And see the dreams that hope denied,
But cherished ever after.

And now, as in the swooning waves
Of half-unconscious sadness,
I hear, above the little graves,
The robin's song of gladness.

The little feet have silent grown,
Or seek the wood no longer,
But memory still retains her own,
And love than death is stronger;

And childish ways and childish plays
And children's voices ringing,
Float upward from departed days
Whene'er my robin's singing.

AUGUST

The tide of being moveth now,
Like some broad river's onward flow,
With earnest murmur, deep and low.

The woods are silent, save by spells
Some strain of insect music swells,
Or some lone bird her sorrow tells.

Too earnest for the laugh and shout,
That heralded the young spring out
From the long winter's gloom and doubt,

Life standeth on her middle way
Between the birth of flowery May
And Winter's frost and sere decay,

And seems to listen, pleased and long,
To the low burden of a song
Unheard by any mortal throng.

The leaves turn upward to the light,
And like dim spectres, robed in white,
The lazy clouds float out of sight.

Where late the hills were crowned with wheat,
The stubble glimmers in the heat,
And, where the woods and meadows meet,

The herds enjoy the shadow deep,
And in his hollow house asleep,
The squirrel doth the long hours keep.

The humming-bird that glances bright,
A winged embodiment of light,
From flower to flower, flight after flight,

Seems an intruder on the low,
Deep song and murmur that doth go
Along with life's intensest flow.

O life intense! O ardent time!
Like flow of some great poet's rhyme,
Resistless pours this luscious chime.

It calms my brain, it soothes my soul,
Till o'er me, past all ill's control,
Sweet waves of calm enjoyment roll.

THE DARKENED ROOM

Out of the deepest sorrow,
  Out of the darkest night,
Into the peaceful morrow,
  Comes the purest light.

Out from the troubled spirit,
  That toils and battles long,
Into the silence after,
  Flows the sweetest song.

God, who cares for the sparrows,
  Watches you and me;
Somewhere in the endless ages,
  Our heritage shall be.

Faithful in every anguish,
  Trusting through the gloom,
We shall be led, hereafter,
  Out of the darkened room.

What if the dawn be hidden
Under the lids of night,
Till the eternal morning
Bringeth supernal light;

Who shall mock our patience,
Or call our faith in vain?
God, who has given us sorrow,
Will give us joy again.

ORALIE

FAR over the regions of sorrow,
Across the dark river of sighs,
I know that the sunlight, to-morrow,
Shall glorify Oralie's eyes.

But what if my Oralie perish,
As perished the rose, in a day,
And what if the beauty I cherish
Should turn to be festering clay;

What balm could my spirit discover
In homilies dismal as pain,
About the dark valley passed over,
And death being Oralie's gain?

Is it gain for the maid in her beauty,
To fade and depart ere she knows
The measures of love and of duty,
Of Life, with its blisses and woes?

Ah, no! 'twould be loss for the morning
To burst in a moment to noon,
The twilight, with golden adorning,
Must preface the stars and the moon.

Though morning in life be the sweetest,
The best ripened life must be long,
And the best ripened life is completest,
No matter how sorrows may throng.

We ripen in storms of affliction;
No sorrow nor toil is in vain;
We gather a sweet benediction
From days of expressionless pain.

And O! when the spring-tide is flowing,
And life is as buoyant as song,
And when the bright summer is glowing
In rapturous billows along,

'Tis then that the spirit, expanding
Like blossoms that open at day,
Leaps up to the highest commanding
Of love that possesses its way.

So upward, thro' darkness and sorrow,
Through pleasures that halo the night,
We grow till we reach the to-morrow,
Expand, till we enter the light.

WANDERING

I

WINTER rules the world without;
Gusts of snow-flakes whirl about,
And the breeze is sharp and cold,
As it sweeps the barren wold.
Summer songsters, summer flowers,
Sing not, bloom not in the bowers;

Yet I'm dreaming all day long
Of a land of bloom and song—
Some fair island in the sea,
Clothed with green eternally—
Where the birds of paradise
Build amid the bowers of spice,
And, from thousand tiny throats,
One harmonious ditty floats,
Through the seasons fair and long,
Sweetest tide of choral song.

II

There, through all the changing time,
Fruits are in their luscious prime,
And the seas of bloom outpour
Finest odors, and the shore
Lies beneath a reef of shells,
In whose corrugated cells
Every fair and lovely dye
Known to earth or sea or sky,
Hides, through all the ardent days,
From the sun's intrusive gaze.

III

Oft in fancy I retreat
To this paradisal seat,
And with one who, long ago,
Learned the song I cannot know,
Saw the glories that to me
Are a shadowed mystery—
Through that thought-created land
Wander onward hand in hand.

IV

So we see, through evening mist,
Domes and towers of amethyst;

Woods and mountains manifold;
Spacious temples wrought of gold;
Paradisal lands of rest
That no mortal foot has press'd;
New Jerusalems that stand
Glorious in that wonder-land.

V

Fades the day and fades the mist;
Sink the towers of amethyst;
And we learn what fruitful rays
Builded up those walls of praise.
When the sunlight quits the sky,
All the glorious visions die;
Yet, through ether clear and far,
Shines the mellow evening star.
So, when youth's warm tide is spent,
Fade the lustres that it lent
To the present and the gone,
And the future's happy dawn;
Yet the steadfast star of love
Shines forever up above.

VI

Memory sketches, fancy paints,
Regions worthy of the saints;
Bears us thither, and we meet,
Gliding on with noiseless feet,
Some enchanted friend who took
Life as but a summer book;
Read it on a pleasant day;
Bowed her head and passed away;
And our wandering fancies range
'Round this mystery of change.
What is death? we ask, and what
Is there real? What is not?

What is life, and what its end?
Whither do our journeyings tend?
Faded; absent; gone for aye;
Yet forever 'round our way
Are the dead: We see them still,
Be our days of joy or ill;
Shall we meet them, face to face,
In some more ethereal place;
Tread with them the pleasant shore,
Whither they have gone before;
Wander with them, hand in hand,
Through some flowery Eden land?
Shall we know the friends we love
In the better world above?
Ah! no answer! well, we wait
Hitherside the golden gate,
And in fancy oft retreat
To some paradisal seat,
Following some enchanted face,
Lovely with its morning grace.
Though the tides of youth be dead,
Still the light of love is shed
O'er us, till we fade and fall;
After that we shall know all,
Or know nothing—who shall tell?
Yet God *doeth all things well.*
Deathless soul, or moldering clay,
God has made a perfect way.
We shall reach the end designed
By the All-pervading Mind.

VII

Call it error, if you will;
Yet I trust Jehovah's skill
Is not balked by any plan
Laid by demon or by man,
And the ends He made us to,

Ever present in His view,
Shall be filled at last by all;
Not a sparrow, even, shall fall
Unaccounted or unknown;
Not a seed that He has sown
Perish in the silent ground,
Till its uses shall be found.

VIII

O! we can but trust and wait,
Till death swingeth wide the gate,
Then we dream that we shall be
Given to life eternally,
And our spirits shall retreat
To some paradisal seat,
Or shall wander, free and far,
Through the realms of sun and star.
But, however this shall be,
Faith this promise bears to me,
God will give me toil or rest,
Peace or turmoil to my breast,
Bliss or anguish, good or ill,
As shall best my needs fulfill.

THE FIRESIDE

Die away, O evening wonder,
From your glory in the west,
For the silent hours are coming
When the laborer shall rest.

Pleasant are the smiles of morning,
Gorgeous is the flaming noon,
But the better fruit of being
Ripens underneath the moon.

Round the merry fires of evening,
When the lamps are blazing bright,
Shine for us the kindly faces
Glorifying all the night.

Then the voice of song and laughter
Echoes through the cheerful room,
And the glow within is warmer,
Deepening with the outer gloom.

We grow tender with the poets,
With the sages we are wise,
With Divinity we gamble
For the everlasting prize.

All the climes the traveler visits
Add their treasures to our store;
Greek and Roman stand before us,
Peerless in their ancient lore.

All the sinewy thongs of iron,
All the quivering nerves of wire,
Binding sea and sea together,
Bless us round our evening fire.

Lo! the lightning from the heavens,
Flashing earthward in its play,
Bears the hourly thought of nation
Unto nation far away.

On its inky panorama
Now the evening press repeats
What the morning voice of Europe
Uttered on a myriad streets.

And we feel the heart of peoples,
Wakened into newer life,
From the old historic ages,
Beating on to nobler strife.

Upward still, in mighty cycles,
Slowly moves the multitude,
To the final culmination,—
Each man's right is all men's good.

Round our evening lamp we gather,
From the world's concentered thought,
What the pens of seers have written,
What the thinkers' toils have wrought,—

What the dubious lights of history
Cast upon the sickening show
Of misrule, and war and vengeance,
Filling up "the earth's long woe,"—

Only as we deal with others
Shall the ministers of fate
Deal with us, as men or nations,
By our meeds of love or hate.

But again the thoughts are centered
In the circle gathered round;
Let the great world rave and struggle;
Leave the depths of thought profound.

Here are gentle hearts that love us,
Love us round our evening fire,
Here are careful hands to guide us
Where our wayward thoughts aspire.

Let the passing hour be yielded
Unto friendship's sweet domain;
Let the social thought be cherished,
Polished memory's golden chain.

Hasten not, O fleeting moments,
When our souls are thus in tune.

To the finest notes of being
Thrilling 'neath the silent moon.

O! through all our days of labor,
Strifes and toilings, we aspire
To be happy in the evening,
With the circle round the fire.

LIFE AND EFFORT

And is the grief that haunts with endless moan
A slow, consuming fire that will not die,
But lifts its smoke and ashes to the sky,
Till all the spirits' fountains simmer dry,
Till love, and faith and heavenly hope have flown?

Not so, not so; each happy morn doth give
Some new incentive to the earnest soul
To wrestle onward in the billowy roll
Of waves that thunder to a far-off goal,
Where cries a voice forever, "Come and live!"

The dying grapple with the illusive waves
That seem to bear them to the happy shore,
They faint and sink and grapple never more,
But still the mirage rises just before,
And ever flitting, cheats us to our graves.

Is human effort thus in vain? Are all
The struggles of our lives, our lofty deeds,
Our glorious conquests, our inflated creeds,
The grappling, striving of our boundless greeds,
More powerless than the dew of evening's fall?

"In vain, in vain!" the preachers moan and cry;
Philosophy—that centers all in God,

From realms of worlds, to worms upon the sod,
That counts the life that thrills the unsightly clod
An emanation from the life on high,—

Divine philosophy with healing wing,
That broods above us, soothes away our woe,
And charms and thrills our lives' serenest flow,
Respondeth thus, "No labor's end we know;
We judge not well of an unfinished thing."

In the eternal present, which we bound
To suit desire and appetite, and mark
With the same pen that tallies up the cark
And care of living, from the light to dark,
And dark to light in ever varying round,—

In this eternal present God will bring
To highest uses every noble thought,
And every work by love's dear fingers wrought;
We can but trust and wait; our fears are nought,
Life's work is ever an unfinished thing.

A QUESTION

THROUGH the changing necromancy
Of a life's protracted dream,
Oft we question in the darkness,
"Are things brighter than they seem?"

Happy voices, angel voices,
Thrilling through the deepest gloom,
Singing that the rose of morning
Trembles to the perfect bloom;

Singing of the fields of Eden,
And the lands beyond the stream,
Tell us, in the dreary watches,
"Are things brighter than they seem?"

Does the cloud that bears the sorrow
Bear the bow upon its breast;
Are the days of storm and battle
Just preparing days for rest?

Is the peace the father giveth
Only waking from a dream,
As a child wakes in the morning?
"Are things brighter than they seem?"

MORNING CLOUDS

Clouds of the morning,
Golden and gay,
Float from the portals
Of sunrise away.

Clouds of the morning,
In splendor unrolled,
You usher Aurora,
In curtains of gold.

Clouds of the morning,
Your beauties suggest
The home of the angels,
The isles of the blest.

As Mirza, in vision,
Beheld your array,
So I see you afloat,
Round the portals of day;

And my vision entranced
On your glory reclines,
Till it fades from the sun,
In your long wav'ring lines;

Till your long wav'ring lines
Soften down in the day,
And you float from the presence
Of sunrise away.

THE FACE AT THE WINDOW

A CHRISTMAS THOUGHT

A SHRUNKEN form, a motley face,
Pressed close against the frosty pane,
And wistful eyes that peer in vain
Into the warm and smiling place;

The warm and smiling place within,
Where happy faces glow and greet;
But she, worn Bedouin of the street,
Can never come, poor child of sin.

Poor child of sin, the night and storm
Shall wrap her in their cold embrace,
And icy lips shall kiss her face;
But we are safe, and we are warm.

Build high the yule fire, fill the bowl,
And sing the christ has come again,
We celebrate his reign with men,
His saving presence in the soul.

Now spread the costly presents round
For those we love; who loves the bad?
Let all our hearts be free and glad,
And flutter to the music's sound.

But who shall see, or who shall know,
The sorrowing man with cross and crown,
Go wandering through the giddy town,
With that poor child of sin and woe?

Perhaps in some Bacchante's den
She meets the kindness we withhold,
A shelter from the biting cold,
With fallen women, ungodly men.

Perhaps—but why inquire her fate,
Who cares for her or where she rests,
Or what vague anguish tears her breast,
And taunts her with her vile estate?

Hail, happy Christmas! hail! again
The larger Christian faith that tends
To shape all things for happier ends,
Most serving God by serving men.

For who so sinful that his sin
Proclaims us wardens of his fate,
Or bids us shut the shining gate
And cry, he shall not enter in?

O! most humane when most divine,
And most divine when most humane,
The old is still renewed,—the pain,
The anguish and the cross are thine!

Who, sleek in satins, white in pearls,
Or rich with stocks and farms and goods,
Seeks out the starving multitudes,
Or whispers hope to fallen girls?

O! still as in the elder times,
Who follows Thee shall know the cross,
And count all hate and pride as loss,
And vengeful thoughts as bitter crimes.

Build high the yule fire! why complain
Of sorrow in the happy earth,
Give this sweet hour to sinless mirth;
But oh, the face against the pane!

Its sad appeal, its mute appeal,
The wistful gaze, as though she caught,
With her weak powers, at better thought,
And fain would rise to heavenly weal.

O! longing eyes and haggard face,
O! rags that wrap the unwashed form,—
A slim protection from the storm,—
Begone! nor haunt this cheerful place.

Now, at the Christmas would we raise
Full high our virtues, we would frown
All sinful passions coldly down
And give to Christ the purest praise.

But somehow yet the crown of thorns,
The saddened features we behold,
Beyond the window in the cold;
And while we sing "A million morns

Shall glow to noon, then fade to night,
While the Redeemer's glory burns,
And every heathen nation turns
To join the cross in glad delight;"

The sad eyes, weeping, turn away,
And through the music sounds a voice,
"Beat on, glad hearts! while you rejoice,
And night flies swiftly from the day,

"I go to seek the wandering sheep
That tremble, just without your door,
And bear my Christmas to the poor,
My comfort to the souls that weep."

And so they pass into the night,
But love has higher meaning caught,
And we are given to nobler thought,
And hence shall walk in clearer light.

Now we are happy, we are warm,
But could we have it back again,—
That guilty face against the pane,—
It should be sheltered from the storm.

So hail! sweet Christmas, hail! again
The larger, better faith that tends
To shape all things for happier ends,
Most serving God, by serving men!

IXION

He can not break the Ophidian thongs,
His direst struggles are in vain;
Swift flies the wheel,—the hissing throngs
Of writhing horrors mock his pain.

Grim Pluto views, with mad delight,
His boundless terror, hopeless grief;
What, though the opposing gods unite,
This is his victim, past relief.

Round his wild orbit let him rage;
Sweep round him, foul, tartarean breath;
Let these exquisite tortures wage
Continual death, but bring no death!

Fly from thyself, Ixion, fly!
Fly from thy hell unto thy hell!

Thy serpents bind thee, vain thy cry,
  Thy fiends about thy orbit yell!

But hark! a strange seraphic note
  Has fallen upon Ixion's ear,
Like the wild thrill that seems to float
  Through love's enchanted atmosphere.

The serpent sinks his hooded head,
  The flying wheel has found a rest,
To lower depths the fiends have fled,
  The air wafts odors from the blest.

'Tis but a moment, yet his soul
  Laves in the ocean of delight;
Heaven reigns; Apollo has control;
  Day glances through the caves of night.

O! faithful type of our humanity,
  Bound to the ever flying wheel of time,
By sensuous cordons of insanity,
  And serpent knots of unforgiven crime.

'Tis only echoes from the higher life,
  The seraph music of the better spheres
Can still the raging hell of sin and strife,
  And glorify the orbit of our years.

God's voices, ever musical and sweet,
  Assert themselves in rhythmic altitudes;
In every strain a poem is complete;
  And blessings flow through all their interludes.

Let thy waked spirit, like the morning flowers,
  That meet the benisons of light and dew,
But ope its petals to the heavenly powers,
  And let the music thrill it through and through.

If Orphic warbler intimate the songs,
  Or if from nature's book the lay is trilled,
Or, if unheard, unseen, unread, it throngs
  The soul, till all its avenues are filled

With the delights of heaven, the joy is thine;
  Thou reckonest how the seraph notes that dwell
Within the depths of intellect divine,
  Can ostracize the powers of death and hell.

FREEDOM

Freedom singeth in the fountains,
Shouteth on the lofty mountains
  Whence the avalanches roll;
Where the songs of birds are ringing,
Where the summer flowers are swinging
  At the balmy air's control,
There is freedom ever singing
  Inspirations to the soul.

Freedom liveth, ever liveth,
And the fruitful strength it giveth
  Will not, cannot fail nor die,
Till this world's great moving lever
That is raising man forever,
  Nearer to the world on high,
Shall all grievous chains dissever,
  As the years go sweeping by.

Freedom is the child of heaven,
Mortal's priceless boon, God-given,
  Deathless as the master soul;
All the ministers of evil,
King nor conqueror nor devil,

Despots that a space control,
Holding high war's bloody revel,
As the ages onward roll,—

Ne'er can make one slave contented
With the galling chains presented
For the limbs that God made free;
Not a people love the master
Who has given them but disaster,
Chains and tears and slavery;
But the world shall move on faster,
Year by year, to liberty.

O! sing praise to God, the giver
Of this boon that lives forever,
Nature, with thy perfect voice:
Sun, that shineth in thy glory,
Shout aloud its wondrous story
Till the listening spheres rejoice;
Till the earth shall evermore be
Freedom's heritage and choice.

O! with marvelous sad yearning,
All the souls of men keep turning,
Turning, yearning for the light,
When from anarchy's long madness,
Rise the nations up in gladness,
To proclaim the people's right;
Then no more to bow in sadness
To th' oppressor's iron might.

Not a slave makes vain resistance
To the curse that gives existence
But a hell of sorrowing days;
Not a panting exile flieth
But his woe to heaven up-crieth,
And, through all its devious ways,

Wounded slavery crieth, dieth,
While the tyrants sing its praise.

Harken thou, O fellow mortal,
Sitting at the future's portal,
To the voices as they flow,
How the starry beams that quiver,
And the swiftly flowing river
Shout for freedom as they go,
Then arise! thank God the giver,
And for Freedom strike the blow.

1856

AN UNCLERICAL PRAYER

Bending downward from thy throne,
Father, hear thy children cry!
See the heart-break, list the moan,
Change our hearts of clay or stone;
Take us, make us all thine own;
Father, hear thy children cry!

Thou, who canst no anger know;
God of mercy, God of love,
Let thy blessings outward flow!
Let thy children from their woe
Leap with gladness, let them know
Thou art mercy, thou art love.

In the cities' gloom and glare
Walk the votaries of sin;
In the hamlets young and fair,
In the country's pleasant air,
Spite of fasting, spite of prayer,
Walk the votaries of sin.

Oh! the tinsel and the shame!
Father, see their nakedness!
Hear their tongues that breathe thy name,
Only with some horrid aim,
Born of alcoholic flame;
Father, see their nakedness.

Let persuasive voices ring
Sweet as that from Calvary,
Till these frail ones rise and bring,
In their waked souls blossoming,
Purer thoughts and deeds that spring
From the seed of Calvary.

High and higher up the height,
Up the bright supernal way,
Lead the souls that seek the light,
Let them lean on thee for might,
Day by day and night by night,
Up the bright supernal way.

In the silence soft and sweet,
Father, let thy presence be;
Where the night winds moan and beat
'Round the hovel, where the street
Bears its myriad erring feet,
Father, let thy presence be.

Turn us from our wickedness,
Unto peace and love and joy;
Let us learn to praise and bless
Him who gives us happiness;
Lift us from our wretchedness
Unto peace and love and joy.

Be our talents great or small,
Let us in thy kingdom dwell;

Lift us up from every fall;
Take the wormwood and the gall
From our lips, and be our all;
Let us in thy kingdom dwell.

THE CEMETERY

Amid the quiet bower of trees,
The ancient grave-yard lies,
A silent hamlet on the road
That leads to paradise.

Here many weary souls have left
Their robes of mouldering clay,
And clad in more ethereal garbs,
Have journeyed on their way.

So shall we all go down to dust
And leave our toils and cares,
And if we live as well, our rest
Will be as sweet as theirs.

1858

RAIN IN JUNE

The rain is falling, falling,
With a constant pattering sound,
As though it were deftly calling
New life from the fruitful ground.

The rain is falling, falling,
Like tears from beauty's eyes,
And dull gray clouds are walling
The fields from sun and skies.

The clouds are flying, flying,
The Sun will soon be out,
And nature, fresh from crying,
Begin to laugh and shout.

For June is like a maiden
Of few and joyous years,
Whose face, with dimples laden,
Laughs ever through her tears.

O rain, what bounteous treasures
Thy cheerful drops shall yield,
To swell the goodly measures,
In barn and byre and field!

The shining woods shall rustle,
And all the growing grain
Rise up with shimmer and bustle,
To greet the pleasant rain.

THE POET'S FRIENDS

The poet's friends are leaves and flowers
That wither, fade and die,
The bow whose transient splendor comes
To deck a stormy sky.

In vain he weaves his lays of love;
Few echoes they awake;
They fall back on his heart like snow,
Distilling flake by flake.

The cold world views him with a frown,
And passes on its way;
But little children in the streets
Shall greet him at their play.

MEGGY MAY

Playing on the parlor floor,
With her laughing eyes of blue,
And her dark locks curling o'er
Dimpled cheeks of rosy hue,
Is our little Meggy May,
Full of joy, with mischief rife,
Sporting through the sunny day,
Fearing nought of care and strife.
Meggy May! Meggy May!
Drive dull frowning care away,
While we sing of Meggy May.

By our darling's side at rest,
Purrs the kitten loud and gay,
He that in the happy hours
Is the partner of her play;
Now our mischief-loving Meg
Grasps him rudely by the ear,
Till Sir Kitt begins to beg,
And I have to interfere.
Meggy May! Meggy May!
Let the sunlight shine to-day,
While we sing of Meggy May.

Now she rises from her place,
And comes skipping to my knee,
Gazes upward in my face,
Laughing in her childish glee,
Slyly gives my nose a tweak,
Pleasure dancing in her eyes,

And before I've time to speak,
Out into the yard she hies.
Meggy May! Meggy May!
Let our hearts be light to-day,
While we sing of Meggy May.

Now she's chasing the first bee
I have seen this sunny spring,
Merry, romping, wild and free,
She's a happy joyous thing:
And I own a brother's love
From my heart doth proudly swell,
As my eyes incessant rove
With that little blue-eyed belle.
Meggy May! Meggy May!
Lovelier far than nymph or fay,
Is our little Meggy May.

Could her life thus ever be,
Free from sorrow, pain and sin,
What a blest eternity
She'd be always dwelling in!
From an Eden here below
To a fairer land on high
Would her happy spirit go,
When her mortal frame should die.
Meggy May! Meggy May!
Let love fill our hearts to-day,
While we sing of Meggy May.

1857

THE BEST INTERPRETER

THERE's a glory in tree and blossom,
A trill in the wild bird's tone,
A balm in the Summery breezes,
That love revealeth, alone.

NOVEMBER

IN WAR TIME

I

November's cheerless skies of rain
  Are ushering in the winter's gloom,
And orchard, forest, field and plain,
  Are shorn of greenness, song and bloom.

No more the sparrow in the bush,
  Nor robin on the maple tree,
Awakes with song the summer hush
  Of nature's odorous melody.

All tuneless are the solemn groves,
  Save that the brooklet murmurs on,
Repeating still its ancient loves,
  As though love's seasons were not gone.

The year that once, so free and bold,
  Leaped down the glowing hills of life,
Dwarfs his bent form beneath the cold,
  And shivers in the wild wind's strife.

On beating wings the raven flits,
  A ghost of darkness and despair;
Far in the wood the great owl sits
  And pours his horror on the air.

A mist obscures the dreary town,
  The streets are silent lines of gloom,
And the lone footman's garb of brown
  Seems woven in death's fated loom.

The wild war rages, doubt and grief
  Are in the land from sea to sea,
Till peace seems like some lost belief
  We cherished in our infancy.

But even now, with healing wing,
  Hope rides in battle's sulphurous car;
And melodies that angels sing
  Are heard in lapses of the war.

Spring comes, and summer follows soon;
  Earth leaps from out the winter's thrall
Into the laps of May and June,
  That spread their mantles over all.

So liberty and peace shall rise
  From under desolation's hoof;
Now faintly through her mournful skies,
  Smiles grim November with the proof.

II

When life goes trembling down the hill,
  In some November far away,
And gath'ring clouds of boding ill
  Obscure the shining light of day,

O! may the solemn scene command
  Some blessing for the great unknown;
Some staff whereon the dying hand
  May rest before its strength be gone.

Some ray to penetrate the gloom,
  To bathe the sombre hills in light,
Shed its soft splendor on the tomb,
  And glorify the awful night.

Some melody of melodies,
To sound across the dismal sea,
With soft and vibrant harmonies,
To blend with purer harmony.

While loved ones that have gone before
Lean downward in their robes of gold,
And give, in love's seraphic lore
Their rapturous welcomes manifold!—

Their rapturous welcomes manifold,
Until the soul forsakes its clay;
Leaps upward from the cumb'ring mold;
Death yields to life, and night to day.

WHITTIER

All honor to the sons of song,
Whose fiery strains, or lays of love,
Have flamed about the tyrant throng
Or taught the slave to look above!

To Ayrshire's plowman bard, who saw
The man uprising over caste;
To Whittier, preaching higher law,
That glorious lesson from the past;

That mighty past in which there stood
A man, a god, where, fresh and cool,
The breeze was in the mountain wood,
And taught mankind the Golden Rule.

Brave champion of the deathless right;
To thee, great Whittier, belong
The honors of a moral knight,
Who wieldeth well his blade of song,

Who tempers every stroke with love,
  With mercy sweetens every thrust,
Points every dying wretch above
  And lifts the trampled from the dust.

Such song as thine, so sweet, so pure,
  So warm with freedom's holy flame,
Must with the living things endure,
  A spotless legacy to fame.

Beat on, great heart, and pour thy tide
  Of song along this stricken land,
Till avarice, lust, and despot pride
  No more on bleeding hearts shall stand.
1858

THE BROOK

Cheerful, sunny brooklet,
  Laugh along thy way,
'Mid the wild, sweet roses,
  Neath the willow spray,
Singing to the lilies
  Nodding on thy rim;
Little brook, I thank thee
  For thy happy hymn.

Thus, upon life's journey
  As I toil along,
May my griefs be lightened
  By the gift of song,
And the soul-flowers, blooming
  By my onward way,
Yield their sweetest fragrance,
  For each love-taught lay.

Merry little brooklet,
Flowing to the sea,
I, too, seek the ocean
Named eternity.
Sinless and rejoicing
Would that I, like thee,
Might go singing onward
To my parent sea.

THE POET

The poet rose and passed beneath the eaves
Whence hung a thousand icy lances down
To glow and glitter in the morning beams;
And when he saw the sun of Christmas rise,
Wandered a-singing thro' the little town;
And all the good folks wondered at his songs,
And said, "Alas! his mind is lost, is lost;
Poor crazy wight, he'll perish in the cold."
The rabble followed, jeering as they went,
And pelting him with balls of gathered snow;
But still he smiled and shook his raven curls,
And sang the good old songs of merry yule,—
Sang of the infant Christ in manger laid,
And of the star that glorified the East
Upon the morn of His nativity;
Sang of the good St. Nicholas and his gifts
To all the happy children in the world.
But still they jeered and pelted, so he turned
Full face upon the idle vagabonds,
And cried aloud in most discordant tones,
"Now here's for vice and sin and ignorance,
And boorish actions and brutality!
A song that I shall sing for you and yours,
For I perceive your drift and wish your praise

And your good will;" and so the song began,
The song that echoed to the very life
The aspirations of the vulgar crowd.
They paused a moment, heard their meanness take
The form of words, and knew their very thoughts
In the harsh music; so they turned and fled,
Fled from themselves, and all the good folks cried,
"The poet is most wise; a throne! a throne!
Build him a throne and let him sing for us
Through all the coming days;" but he passed on;
And there each Christmas time they think of him,
And drink his health at many a steaming board.

ISADORE

PUREST souls sometimes are given
Into forms of slightest mould,—
Spirits that belong to heaven
As the lambkin to the fold,
That no earthly love can stay,
From their native shore away.

Spirits very meek and lowly,
Such as, in the days to come,
Singing praises to the holy
In some glad millennium,
Then shall tread the earth alone
Till a thousand years are gone.

Such a soul of rarest beauty
O, sweet Isadore, was thine,
As along the path of duty
Trode thy presence half divine,
Till a shadow, dark and bold,
Smote thee, and thy heart grew cold.

Thou didst perish like the blossoms,
In the sad November rain,
And we carry in our bosoms
Evermore regret and pain,
Surging like the winds that rave
Nightly o'er thy little grave.

THE SONGS OF BIRDS

I

The birds of morning rise and shake
The music from their souls again;
I hear them in the tangled brake;
They warble down the shadowy glen;
And still to me
They seem to be
Forever fluting out the call
"Come up! come up!
The royal feast
Is spread for man and bird and beast,
With peace on earth, good will to all."

II

The larks fly to th' advancing sun,
The robins twitter on the tree,
And all the small birds raise, as one,
Their piping trebles of harmony.
And when the noisy day is done,
The whippowil's sadder melody,
From willowy thickets, far or near,

Resounds through garden, grove and hall;
And still to me
They seem to be
Forever fluting out the call
"Come up! come up!
The royal feast
Is spread for man and bird and beast,
With peace on earth, good will to all."

ANABEL

Comes my heart with grief o'erladen,
Bringing offerings to thee;
O! thou bright angelic maiden,
Who in far-off spirit Aidenn,
Sin and strife and sorrow free,
Dwelleth now in joy forever
Where the power of death is o'er,
And no poisonous breath shall sever
Those who live and love forever,
On that undiscovered shore.

But grim sorrow sitteth, dwelling
In this weary heart for thee,
Whence affection came upwelling
All its truth forever telling,
Telling its sincerity:
Truth we felt in days of olden
When our sun was shining golden,
And we thought us truly blest,
In those happy days of olden,
Ere thy spirit neared its rest.

But I'm thinking of a meeting,
Yet another one with thee,
When the years have ceased their fleeting;
And I'm thinking of the greeting
That thou then wilt give to me.
1854

THE TOILER'S DREAM

The toiler slept a long, uneasy sleep,
And in the midst thereof, a vision rose—
A dream about a dream that filled his brain:
He thought he woke, and on his wife and boys
Gazed with a tender yearning at his heart,
Then quickly turning to the uncurtained pane
Saw Venus glowing with a tremulous light
Half sunken in the rosy sea of dawn;
Then rose, and putting on his raiment, passed,
Beneath his humble door-tree, sped across
Great plains of red-top, shining in the dew
Like roses steeped in nectar, fields of wheat,
Whose slender lances in the crispy air
Tossed like the streamers which we see on ships
Sailing in favoring breezes from their ports;
Beneath the elm-trees, where the robins sang
Their joyous praises to the advancing sun;
Across the orchards, where the cat-bird's mirth,
In garrulous quavers, shook the infant fruit;
And over rocky hill and flowery dale;
And on, and on, and still the wonder grew—
A sea of glory in the shining East—
Till all his soul, enamored of the scene,
Shouted, in unison with brooks and birds;
And all the growing dawn beheld a race
Of happy men where justice held aloft

Her polished scale, that wavered with a breath;
And none were found to cheat the balance, none
To wring the sweat of blood from weary brows,
And none were beggars, none were lords, but all
Bore burdens for each other, and the wealth
They made, outmeasuring individual needs,
Wrought works of art and towers for learning's use,
And builded airy halls in pleasant parks
Wherein the people at their leisure came
To read the masters of philosophy,
To search the lettered scrolls of history through,
Or mark the unlettered legends of the rocks,
With all their marvelous stories of the past,
That, antedating continents and man,
Recall the life of the primordial seas;
Turn amateurs in science and produce
The wonders of the retort; analyze
All forms of use or beauty into gas
As thin as rhymes for formal holidays;
Turn the great telescopes to heaven and count
The worlds on worlds and weigh them one by one;
Look through the microscopes and there behold
The infusorial myriads of the air
And earth and water, and all things therein;
And chasing science thus to suit the will,
Each following that which yielded most delight,
The range of knowledge grew from more to more:
Some viewed the wonders on the chiseled stone,
Wrought by the Angelos of every town;
Or on the canvas saw the raptures grown
Beneath the touch of Raphaels numbered not,
Except by needs of the communities
Of cultured souls that filled the teeming world;
Or on a million pages traced the flow
Of poesy, that tempts the heights sublime,

And echoes faintly to the ear of clay
The infinite murmurs of diviner thought;
Or, when of learning weary, they would chase
The flying ball across the park, or swim
In the luxurious mazes of the dance,
Or, in gymnasiums well appointed, train
Each nerve and muscle to the highest use;
Pitch the huge quoit, or toil upon the bars,
Or ply the oars upon the river's breast,
Or linger where the heavenly strains outpour
From instruments of perfect form and tone;
Or wander singing through the pleasant woods
Where myriad feathered warblers congregate.
And when returning from a day of rest
To quiet homes that nestled in the groves,
They met the household with a love that made
The very roof-trees blossom into joys,
And all the world a paradise of peace.
How happily their thanks went forth to God;
How sweet they rested, and with morning rose
To toil, and know that best results are sure
From every stroke of hammer on the steel,
Or furrow cut across the pleasant fields,
Or rush of throbbing engines, spread of sails
That catch the breezes on a thousand seas;
The whir of spindles and the clank of looms,
The nervous strokes of telegraphs that bear
The thought of continent to continent,
The labors of the builders, and of all
Who build up cities, make the country smile,
Train nature up to uses best for man.
The sun awoke him, shining through the panes
On the bare walls and meagre couch of straw;
And so, the vision past, his toil began
Upon a stately pile of stone that grew
On labor poorly paid, in bounty wrung
From other toilers by the sharper's art.

A mansion fit for princes of the mind,
Kings in the empire of triumphant souls;
But yet, a tribute raised by trembling hands
To lying impudence and brazen cheek,
And vulgar meanness that but shun the law's
Just penalties, and keep within the range
Of human decencies, by that small breadth
That people always recognize between
A rogue convicted and a rogue at large.

So ran the dream, and so it faded out;
Yet all the world is beautiful and fair,
And all the souls are nearest God, that dream
Of happy futures when the earth shall move,
And all the universe of man revolve
In one wide orbit circling all delights,
And every man shall yield his brother man
The good he claims himself; and right shall be
The Lord and Master over all that live.

EVER

Ever strive and ever labor,
Fainting not at all!
Let endurance be thy watchword,
Though thy strength be small.

Small the strength to each that's given,
Yet sufficient still
To upbear the dauntless spirit
Over every ill.

What though calumny traduce thee?
Scorn the idle jade!
Ever true to thy convictions,
Stand, nor be afraid.

Let the poor time-serving trembler
Vaunt his hollow creed ;
He would, like the storied Levite,
Let the stranger bleed ;

Or, with temporizing tactics,
Raise the Jewish cry
Of "Release to us Barabbas,
But let Jesus die."

Does thy heart beat high for freedom,
And for the opprest—
O ! let not its warm pulsations
Slumber in thy breast.

Truth demands that thou shouldst utter
Every noble thought,
Though it hedge thy path with sorrow,
Bring thy name to naught.

There is nothing true and noble,
There is naught sublime,
But imparts a heavenly music
To the keys of time.

Through the ever-widening cycles
Of unending years,
Lives and grows the better influence
That was born in tears.

Hard it seems to work for others
By the midnight oil,
And receive but jeers and curses
For your patient toil.

Hard to publish truths unwelcome
To the public mind,
And be left to feed in sorrow
On truth's bitter rind.

Did the old disciples falter,
When the offended kings
Cast them to the hungry lions
In their steaming rings ?

And shall he who dares to suffer
For the right to-day,
Not receive his meed of glory,
Just as well as they ?

Truth has gospels unaccepted,
Calvaries yet to climb,
Crosses to be borne whose shadows
Shall outmeasure time.

Strike for right with zeal, but never
Deal in random blows ;
Being very sure 'tis evil
That thou dost oppose.

Then with arms like Scandinavian
Thor, or Tubal Cain,
Ply the hammer on old Error's
Rough, unyielding grain.

Or if but an humble singer,
Tune thy slender songs ;
They are drops whose small erosions
Wear the flinty wrongs.

Battle on! and God's approval,
Nerving heart and will,
Shall upbear thy hero spirit,
Over every ill.

1857

FOR THE DYING YEAR

The year is growing old and gray;
So am I:—
And I hear the night winds say,
"Let him die!

"Let the trembling dotard go
To his rest:
He has lost his wits, and so
Death is best."

How we loved him in his prime,
Love him still!
But his heartless father, Time,
Works him ill.

He who gave him life and joy,
And a crown,
Now, in madness to destroy,
Cuts him down.

Unto thee, O dying year!
Do we owe
Other tribute than a tear
For thy woe?

Thou hast given us much of grief,
Much of peace;
Opening blossom, ripening leaf,—
Love's increase.

Now thy harvests' stubbles stand
In the snow,
And thy weak and trembling hand
Hangeth low.

Take, O Graybeard, to thy rest
Blessings three,
Given in love, for love is best
Endlessly.

One to shrive thy soul, and one
For thy fame,
Still to glow when days are done
With thy name.

One with all our gladness glad;
With our grief
Eloquently, wildly sad,
Past belief.

Twelve short songs, in many a key,
Quivering by,
Birth, and hope, and destiny
Laugh and sigh;

Bridal gladness, funeral train,
Bud and bloom,
Seed-time, harvest, sun and rain,
Winter's gloom;

Young ambition, trembling age,
Child at play,
Student bent above the page,
Power's decay;

All so wrought to one grand theme,
They shall run
Onward, as some wand'ring stream,
Here in sun,

There in shadow, making still
Pictures fair,
While its varied murmurs fill
All the air;

Till where thou art lying low,
White and cold,
All thy days shall come and go
As of old,

Singing, sighing by thy bed,
Fallen year;
So that even among thy dead
Thou shalt hear!

See! the fagot's blaze is low;
Hear the bell!
Thou art fading, ah! I know
'Tis thy knell!

Rise from dreams; the King is dead;
Hail the King!
Bind the laurel round his head;
Shout and sing!

He shall strut his little day
On the stage;
To life's grief and passion play
Add a page.

Breaking hearts and mending crowns
He shall come;
Clothing some in silken gowns;
In tatters, some,—

Then shall seek oblivion's vale
Like the old,
When one more twelve-chaptered tale
Has been told.

Keep us, Father, in Thy hand,
Thine alone;
Years may drift like grains of sand
Tempest-sown.

But within Thy guardian care
We may dwell
Safely in the here or there—
All is well!

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